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THE
T H E O R Y
OF AGREEABLE
SENSATIONS:

IN WHICH

The LAWS observed by NATURE in the Distribution of PLEASURE are investigated; and the Principles of Natural THEOLOGY and Moral PHILOSOPHY are established.

Including likewise, relative to the same Subject,

DISSERTATION

UPON

HARMONY OF STYLE.

— *Non de villis, domibusve alienis,*

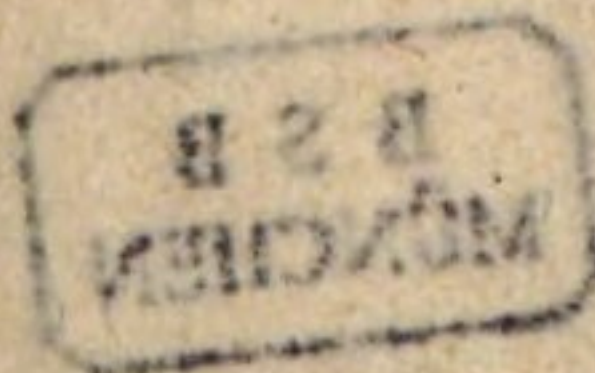
— *sed quod magis ad nos*

Pertinet, & nescire malum est, agitamus. HOR.

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P R E F A C E.

THE first sketch of this work was no more than a letter to Lord *Bolingbroke*, which was published without the Author's knowledge, in a collection of select pieces printed at *Paris* in 1736. Some time after, a man of letters, who for his amusement had a small printing-house at his country-seat, thought proper to oblige his friends with an elegant edition of this small work in octavo. Upon this, the author, who looked upon it as a rude and imperfect draught, never intended to see the light, was solicitous to explain and enlarge his thoughts, by giving his treatise a more perfect and regular form.

This he has done in the Theory with which we now present the world. The design of it is to discover the source and genuine standard of our several inclinations, pleasures, and duties, by which means we obtain as it were the key to the whole system of humanity and morals. God having endowed man with various faculties, as well corporeal as intellectual, in order to promote his happiness, also vouchsafes to conduct him to this noble end, not only by the deductions of reason, but also by the force of instinct and sensation, which are more powerful and efficacious principles. Thus nature, by a sensation of pain, instantaneously apprizes us of what might prove hurtful to us; and on the contrary, by an agreeable sensation, gently leads us to whatever may tend to the preservation of our existence, and to the perfect state of our faculties, these being the two points on which our happiness depends. It is true they

have already been observed by several modern philosophers, but our author, not satisfied with this, traces, and particularizes these observations in the following manner. Our faculties can neither be of use, nor display themselves farther than as we exercise them; motion or action is therefore so necessary to us, that without it we must inevitably sink into a deplorable state of insensibility and languor. On the other hand, as we are weak and limited creatures, all excessive and violent action would impair and destroy our organs; we must therefore use only moderate motion or exercise, since by this means the use or perfection of our faculties is reconciled with our chief interest, which is self-preservation. Now it is to this happy medium, I mean to a moderate exercise of our faculties, that the Author of our nature, has so wisely annexed pleasure.

Our author having established this principle, considers the various pleasures of the senses, those of the understanding, and those of the heart. He also distinctly accounts for every thing that is esteemed beautiful and agreeable in the works of nature and of art, in countenances, in colors, in sounds, in the figure, proportion, symmetry, variety, and novelty of objects, in the tastes of every age, in language and style, in the sciences, in the passions, in the motions of the soul, and in a word in every thing of a moral and physical nature, or which is conducive to the real advantage of man.

By these steps we easily ascend to a first intelligent and beneficent cause, who has established this beautiful harmony, and given us precisely that degree of sensibility, which, considering every thing, was best suited to

our wants and necessities , whatever has been advanced to the contrary by Mr. *Bayle* , whose system is here refuted.

Our philosopher , always animated by the noblest and most worthy views , makes it his particular business to show , that man finds his happiness in the practice of the several duties he owes to God , his neighbour , and himself. Not content to stop here , he , by reasoning on the good and evil that is annexed to every condition , shows the pre - eminence of intellectual good , and the advantage that every one may reap from a proper use of his faculties , in order to render life agreeable , and contribute to the public good , by an uninterrupted series of rational occupations.

This short analysis is sufficient to convince the reader , that the present work contains the true principles of

natural theology, of morality, of eloquence, and of taste, both with respect to the liberal arts and works of genius and wit. He will here in a particular manner learn the principal end of wisdom, the great art of rendering ourselves as happy as the frailty of our present condition will allow.

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THE
THEORY
OF AGREEABLE
SENSATIONS.

CHAP. I.

*There is a science of sensations, as certain
as any other branch of natural knowledge,
and of greater importance.*

THERE have been philosophers who, by
their observations, have learned from Nature
some of those rules which she has prescribed
to herself in the distribution of motion. The
discovery and illustration of these laws form

a science supported by the same striking evidence as geometry. Can we suppose the succession of changes in bodies to be an object adapted to the exercise of our faculties, and shall the mind be unable to form any judgment, or idea, of what passes within itself? Is it possible, that the shining ray of experience, which discovers to us the laws of external motion, should fail, and be extinguished, as soon as we attempt to trace out the cause of our internal sensations? 'Tis true, indeed, that matter, space, and time, which, by their different combinations, express every degree of motion, have the advantage of calling to their aid geometrical calculation, and this to an amazing extent. But although the secret modifications of the body and soul, from whence spring our sensations, do not admit of any precise measure, they are, nevertheless, the objects of certain knowledge. In the theory of motion, we traverse, as it were, with a compass in our hand, the

immensity of space and time : In the more confined circle of our inquiry into sensation, we cannot expect to make so brilliant a progress, but we shall be equally sure, provided we take care to be supported by undoubted observations, and to express them in such a manner as to convey to the mind clear and distinct ideas.

It is not so much the certainty, as the importance of our knowledge that renders it valuable ; and science is never more interesting, than when it tends to explain the distribution of pleasure, which is the object of our desires. I am aware, that we are apt to be disgusted with researches that furnish only ideas, instead of conveying, as they seem to promise, a sensitive pleasure : and abstruse reflections may often throw a damp on joy itself. But it is not to the imagination that I propose to address myself here concerning pleasure ; I mean only to explain its nature, I aspire not to convey it. Those laws that regulate its birth

and rise, somewhat resemble the source of the fruitful Nile, which enriches Ægypt. We may be unacquainted with those laws, while we enjoy the benefits they produce; but no sooner are we incited by curiosity to trace out their origin, than we have many deserts to traverse. I am of opinion, however, that those who undertake the task, will feel a pleasing sensation in their own reflections; and 'tis surely to enjoy nature to see her beauty.

The theory of sensations has not only the advantage of presenting us with an object worthy of our attention, but furnishes us also with the principles of arts, in which we are still more interested.

Those who have excelled as Poets, Orators, and Painters, have not always been actuated by the sudden inspiration of a blind instinct; they have often been directed in their performances by deep, and refined reflections on what was capable of affording

pleasure to the mind ; they have transfused them into their works ; and these being collected, have formed the respective theories of Poetry, Oratory, and Painting. All these particular speculations are as so many dismembered parts, to which the theory of sensations is entitled to claim a right.

Of all arts, there is none more important than that of being happy ; and there is none which has given rise to a greater variety of opinions. *Varro* has reckoned up almost three hundred upon what constituted the happiness of man. The whole system of moral philosophy depends upon this question : and in order to obtain a clear and perfect solution of it, we must trace it back to the laws of sensation ; these we must examine, and allow ourselves to be conducted by a chain of consequences.

In *Plato's* dialogue upon a republic, or rather upon *internal justice*, some of his speakers complain that legislators and philosophers,

in their incitements to virtue, urge no other motives for embracing it, than the consideration of those advantages which attend it. Therefore, they require of *Socrates* to prove, that Virtue, by her own native charms, constitutes the happiness of those who have her in their possession: and this he does by a long comparison between the different forms of government in the world, and that republic formed within us by our reason and our passions.

This doctrine of the Platonic School, may, as I apprehend, be clearly established by the theory of sensations. To this point let us direct our inquiries, and we shall soon discover the principles of an exact system of morality. It may be objected to *Epicurus*, that his ideas of pleasure were very imperfect, and that he had no just conception of the value and extent of mental pleasures. We shall acknowledge that virtue is the surest means held out to us by nature to secure us from

painful and uneasy sensations, and to convey to us those which are the most agreeable.

There are Christians who imagine the Gospel condemns virtue to be unhappy in this life. The law of God, which, as set forth in the holy Scriptures, is in itself so lovely, is to such persons an unsupportable yoke. Were they free from the servile dread that oppresses them, they would launch out into the most enormous crimes; equally unhappy under the tyranny of a depraved disposition, and under the apprehension of future punishment. Far different is the state of those in whom *perfect love casteth out fear*. — They are sensible that the precepts of the Gospel, and of the Prophets, are entirely agreeable to the injunction of *Christ* himself, *to love God and our neighbour*. And what is there in this command repugnant to our reason, or that our hearts ought not to approve? Should we not glow with the tender feelings of benevolence towards mankind, and preserve in

our minds an humble submission to the decrees of an infinitely wise and supreme Being?

By the laws of Nature, any exercise or employment suited to our faculties, is always accompanied with pleasing sensations. This source of virtuous pleasures flows no less for the Christian than for the Infidel; but according to the dispensation of Grace, the Christian is infinitely more happy in the future felicity he looks for, than in any present happiness he possesses.

The theory of sensations and of moral theology arrive at the same end, though by different ways: each, by principles peculiar to itself, compares and estimates the value of present good. But the theory of sensations has one advantage over moral theology: in establishing the same laws, it enforces them by the irresistible power of self-love.

C H A P. II.

The plan of this essay.

AMIDST the complicated variety of good and evil which every where furrounds us, it is a matter of the highest importance to discern aright. This we should be incapable of doing, were we not endowed with agreeable as well as painful sensations. These serve to direct our choice. Whatever contributes in any degree to our preservation, is accompanied with an impression of pleasure; and on the contrary, when we are threatened with danger, a painful impression gives us the alarm. To the establishment of this law are we indebted for the duration of our life, the vigor of our faculties, and the enjoyment of that small portion of happiness which nature has allotted to us. This principle alone, being properly illustrated, will open to us

the source of all our sensations, will display the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, and point out to us our duty towards God, our neighbour, and ourselves. The subject, however, does not admit of any shining discoveries; for what novelty can be expected in a matter which, ever since the origin of mankind, has been the constant object of the desires of the heart, and the reflections of the mind? We claim, therefore, no other merit, than of collecting together, in one distinct view, the ideas which are scattered in various authors, of arranging them with method, and placing them in a clear light, so that they may mutually illustrate each other, and thereby form a complete and regular work.

C H A P. III.

There is a pleasure connected with whatever exercises, without fatiguing, the organs of the body.

THERE are animals which seem to be endowed with a sufficiency to supply all the wants of their nature. In the element where they are placed, they find every thing necessary for their preservation or growth. It is not so with man. His desires are unbounded. We may apply to him what *Plato* has said of Love. The God of riches, and the Goddess of want, seem to have been equally concerned in his formation. He is oppressed with wants, which all nature seems barely sufficient to supply; at the same time he is gifted with a variety of organs that enable him to approach the most distant objects, to

discern their qualities, and to convert them to his own use. Whatever exercises, without straining or relaxing these organs, has a salutary tendency, and is accompanied with an agreeable sensation.

The restless disposition which we observe in children shows us how much they are charmed with motion. Dancing and hunting are the favorite amusements of youth, and they take the greater pleasure in these diversions, the more they are brisk and lively. Even old people, in whom age has blunted every other sensation, are pleased with gentle and moderate exercise.

The sensation that accompanies the motion of the hands is so minute as to be imperceptible, but it is not the less real. How often do we see the female sex have recourse to some slight occupation, in order to drive away melancholy, and with no other view than to a little temporary amusement: the work itself, though trivial, has an agreeable effect,

and the employment causes an agreeable impression.

This pleasure is derived from the exercise of the organs of transpiration: The observations of *Sanctorius* * prove this to a certainty. There are vapors imperceptible to our eyes, which are continually exhaling through the pores of the skin: were they to remain too long in the blood, they would give a shock to the constitution: too little, or too much exercise equally obstructs this invisible exhalation; on the other hand, such exercise as is suited to our strength, promotes perspiration, and contributes to our health.

* A most ingenious and learned physician, who flourished in the beginning of the 17th century, and was professor in the university of Padua. After an exact study of the state and manner of insensible perspiration, and a course of experiments upon it, he drew up his curious system, which has been greatly admired by all the professors of the art. It is called *Ars de Statica Medicina*. There are several other works of his, which are proofs of his great abilities and learning.— See *Biographical Dict.* 8vo. vol. x.

We find by the experiments of *Sanctorius*, that it is owing to this exercise of the organs of transpiration, that the warmth of a fire is so grateful in winter, and the cooling breezes so refreshing in summer; and hence that pleasure which attends whatever contributes to promote, and quicken the circulation of the blood.

When we view any object, the colors distinguish it to our eyes; some of them are dull and melancholy, but most of them are agreeable. Sir *Isaac Newton* has shown us by experiments the reason of this difference. Those rays which form the color of fire have the greatest force; this color is the most brilliant, but it soon fatigues the sight. Those which form a green, having only a moderate motion, are therefore capable of exercising the fibres of the eye, without weakening them. The brown and black convey an image of sadness, because they leave the eyes in a state of inaction. These colors make the same

impression on every eye, but there are some which have a different effect upon different eyes. Thus, to an eye composed of tender and delicate fibres, the violet is more agreeable than the orange color, being formed of fainter rays; for colors are more or less pleasing, according as they affect the various fibres of the eye.

Whatever object strikes the sight agreeably with its colors, becomes still more pleasing by the greatness or variety of its parts. The immense extent of the ocean; the rivers which precipitate themselves from the high mountains into the low vallies; the meadows that present to our view the most charming landscapes; all these objects are agreeable, in proportion to the grandeur and variety of the images, painted in the *retina* of the eye.

It is the same with the fibres of the ear as with those of the eye; they are agreeably affected with what exercises without fatiguing

them : what can be more pleasing than the soft murmurs of a purling stream?

The feat of hearing is composed of nervous fibres of a spiral form , each of which has a particular elasticity. A sound is agreeable, in proportion as it finds the chords of this wonderful instrument in unison. On the contrary , the noise is harsh and grating, when the fibres clash , and hurt each other, by the discord of their motions.

Variety likewise adds pleasure to sounds : the most agreeable cease to be so , by a tiresome repetition of their action upon the same fibres.

The different construction of the organs of hearing , is the cause why sounds , disagreeable to some persons , are agreeable to others. *Petrarch* * gives us an account of a man , who was less pleased with the singing of nightingales , than with the croaking of frogs.

* *De remed fortun.* l. 2.

It is probable the fibres of his ears were so closely compacted, that a succession of piercing sounds might only shake, without fatiguing them.

The organs of taste and smell are as wisely adapted to our necessities. Sharp and pungent salts, which if conveyed into the body by respiration and digestion, might engender various diseases, indicate their malignant quality, by the violence of their impression on the nervous *papillæ*, that form the seat of taste and smell.

The most salutary remedies are in some respects very unpleasing. Let this, however, not surprise us: they would be poison to a man in health, and even are so to most sick persons. But indulgent nature holds out to us certain remedies, necessary in all distempers, and almost sufficient for their cure. They consist in the use of such diet as is proper to dilute, refresh, and renew the blood. And when a person is attacked with

illness, his taste would prefer these universal remedies to the most exquisite and savory dishes.

C H A P. IV.

Whatever exercises, without fatiguing the mind, gives a pleasing sensation.

EXERCISE of the mind is as necessary as that of the body, to preserve our existence. The senses of other animals, being more quick than ours, are sufficient to direct them to follow what is agreeable to their nature, or to shun whatever is contrary thereto. But we are endowed with reason, in order to supply the deficiency of our senses; and Pleasure presents herself as an incitement to exercise, in order to keep the mind from a state of hurtful inactivity. Pleasure is not only the parent of sports and amusements,

but also of arts and sciences: and, as the whole universe is, as it were, forced by our industry, to pay tribute to our wants and desires, we cannot but acknowledge our obligation to the law of nature, which has annexed a degree of pleasure to whatever exercises, without fatiguing the mind. The pleasure accompanying it is so great, that it sometimes transports the very soul, and she seems, then, as it were, disengaged from the body. We know what is recorded in history concerning *Archimedes**, and several

* This alludes to what is recorded of him in history. When Syracuse was taken by storm by the Romans, he was in his museum, his mind and eyes so intent upon some geometrical problems, that he neither heard the clamor of the Romans, nor perceived that the city was taken. In this transport of study and contemplation, a foldier came upon him with his drawn sword, whom *Archimedes* seeing, besought him to hold his hand, till he had finished the problem he was about. But the foldier, deaf to his entreaty, run him through the body.—Such was the unhappy fate of *Archimedes*. See *Biog. Dict. 8vo. vol. i.*

other geometricians both ancient and modern. If we doubt the truth of such facts, we must at least acknowledge their probability, since we meet every day with a number of similar examples. When we view a chess-player so deeply immersed in thought, as to be in a manner lost to his outward senses, should we not imagine him to be wholly engrossed with the care of his own private affairs, or of the public weal? But the object of all this profound meditation is the pleasure of exercising the mind, by the movement of a piece of ivory.

From this exercise of the mind arises the pleasure we take in delicate and refined sentiments, which after the manner of *Virgil's* shepherdes *, are sometimes artfully concealed, but so as to afford us the pleasure of discovering them.

There have been some men, and those

* *Et fugit ad salices, & se cupit ante videri.*

dignified with the title of Philosophers, who maintained, that the exercise of the mind was no further agreeable, than as it excited in us a desire of acquiring fame and applause. But our own reflection is sufficient to convince us, that we often apply ourselves to reading and to contemplation, without any prospect of the future, or any other motive than to pass away agreeably the present moment.

The pleasure we receive from any work of art, results chiefly from that order and symmetry, which enables the mind to comprehend, and retain the different parts of an object.

To SYMMETRY, likewise, or measure, are we to ascribe the pleasing effect of rhyme. One of our poets has attempted to banish rhyme from our poetry, and to confine it entirely to acrostics, and to those trivial pieces, the sole merit of which consists in their difficulty. He seems not to have well

considered, that verses are intended to be sung, or spoken in public; and pass from the player, or musician, to the people at large; and that, consequently, their structure renders them more complete, and more easy to be impressed on the memory.

The Latin and Greek languages stand in no need of the assistance of rhyme. Each species of their versification, by means of its peculiar measure, is strongly marked, and is easily retained; and therefore a repetition of similar sounds, being entirely superfluous, would, by parity of reason, become equally disagreeable.

But if this kind of monotony in our poetry is so pleasing, whence comes it, says Mr. *de la Motte*, that the like circumstance recurring in music, should almost always displease? The reason we must assign for it is this: The principal end of music is to charm by sounds, and this end the musician cannot attain so well, any other way, as by variety.

But the poet's aim is not merely to gratify the ear, he must do more: he must imprint on the memory a train of ideas, of sentiments, and expressions. The whole intent and scope of his poetry is to make a strong and indelible impression: — And we find, that almost every living language offers rhyme to the poet, as the most favorable assistance he can make use of, in the execution of his design.

IMITATION by colors, sounds, gestures, or discourse, is also a species of symmetry. It presents objects to our view, which the imagination can easily comprehend, by comparing them with those which are already known to us.

If we are to believe what *Aristotle* says, the representation, or copy of an object is agreeable, for this reason only, because the mind, by comparing it with its original, forms a judgment of the likeness, and thereby acquires a degree of knowledge. But is not

the same knowledge acquired, when we discover the imperfections of a copy? Were this observation to hold good, the works of all painters, poets, orators, and musicians, however different in the execution, would afford an equal degree of pleasure.

The representation of any object, according to other philosophers, pleases only as it affects the passions. Undoubtedly it derives from thence its most powerful charm; but still we must allow, that any object the least interesting, will convey some degree of pleasure, provided it be expressed with truth, and the symmetry between the picture and the original be preserved. This being one of the principal laws of sensation, that when all the parts of a whole are so formed and arranged, that the mind can easily comprehend and retain the idea, it cannot fail to be agreeable.

CONTRAST in painting, poetry, and eloquence, is also a species of symmetry, which making different objects to approach each

other, brings forth to view their respective characteristic marks, by means of comparifon. Thus the ancient fculptors, in order to heighten the beauty of a *Venus* or of a *Grace*, inclofed it in the hollow ftatue of a Satyr; and *Virgil* makes ufe of the fame ingenious device, when, in order to paint, in the moft lively colors, the violent perturbation of *Dido*, he fhades his picture with the folemn gloom of night, which overspread the whole face of nature. There are other proportions, befides thofe of fymmetry, which are eafy to be comprehended; they are moft fuccefsfully displayed in architecture. Thus the height of porticos, in regular buildings, is double to their width; the height of the entablature is the fourth of the column, and the third of it ferves for the height of the pedeftal. All great architects, amongst the different proportions, fuited to the principal design of their works, have invariably fixed on thofe which the mind can moft eafily comprehend.

It is with the musician as with the architect. The *unison* and the *octave* should seem to form the most pleasing concords, because they impress the fibres of the ear with the greatest degree of motion. But the pleasure of music is more congenial to the mind than to the ear. The *quinte* is the most agreeable consonance, inasmuch as it presents to the mind the most agreeable relation; for with less attention than to any other, it distinguishes its consonancy.

There are bold, and elaborate pieces of music, that please only the nicest connoisseurs. By their exquisite taste they can, with ease, distinguish, amongst sounds, seemingly discordant, a relative harmony, that would escape an ear less refined than their own.

From the analogy which reigns throughout all nature, we have reason to infer, t'at other objects of our senses are reducible to the same law that regulates the harmony of sounds.

There are colors, whose particular combinations are delightful to the sight; and it is probable, their impression on the fibres of the eye forms, as it were, a sort of consonance. Perhaps this law may also extend, in some measure, to smell and taste. Those objects of these senses which are conducive to health, are pleasing; but this is not always the precise measure of their being agreeable.

It is not by the rules of proportion, or of symmetry alone, that art aspires to render its works most agreeable. — It is chiefly by connecting their different parts with one principal object, which enables the mind to comprehend, and retain them.

This agreement with, or relation to, one particular end, suffices to embellish whatever is most simple in its kind. It is indeed the chief ornament: it presides over all the various component parts of a work, assigns to each its proper place, and points them out as beauties or imperfections, according as they agree with this principal design.

Nor does art confine itself to unite the several parts of a work with one common end : it also connects them together, by making them subordinate to a principal part, which forms, as it were, their centre of union.

The Gothic architects were fond of placing on each side of their buildings huge piles of stone, which almost excluded a view of the edifice, confounded the sight, and kept the eye in a state of embarrassment.

Bramante *, and in imitation of him, many of our modern architects, better acquainted than their predecessors with the art of agreeably striking the eye, have placed in the centre of their buildings, some part more

* One of the greatest architects that Italy has produced. He lived in the 15th century, and was contemporary with *Raphael*. What has chiefly rendered his name so famous, is that magnificent building, *St. Peter's church*, at Rome, the model of which he drew, but lived to see only part of it carried into execution. — See *Vies des Peintres*.

eminently conspicuous, which presents to the view a fixed point, from whence the eye is easily carried through the several parts of the work.

Skilful painters observe the same rule. The groupe of their figures is so disposed as to direct the attention, and fix the eye, to one principal object. — Poets likewise follow the same maxim in their compositions.

Thus Poets and Painters, not only preserve a due subordination of all the different characters to the principal hero, but also endeavour to make all the incidents of their respective subjects subservient to one great event. And what can be more pleasing to the mind, than to take in, as it were, at one glance, a regular chain of numerous events, thus linked together by the mutual relation they have to one important action?

We may indeed collect different fables into one poem, and arrange them in succession, like pictures in a gallery. This method has

been followed by *Ovid*, *Statius*, and several other poets. But many ages before their time, when poetry was yet in its infancy, *Homer* discovered, that it would afford a more pleasing entertainment to the mind, to place in one view or picture, a number of characters, all concurring in the advancement of the same action. This idea produced the first epic poem. *Æschylus*, a considerable time afterwards, formed the plan of a tragedy, by the actual representation of an event, with all its concomitant circumstances. This great poet, the rival, but not the imitator, of *Homer*, was at no loss to find, that a dramatic poem would please more effectually, in which one principal action would connect all the scenes, and hold them, in a manner, linked together in the memory. *Æschylus* added, likewise, the unity of time and place to that of action. In his *Eumenides* the scene of action changes from Delphi to Athens, but in all his other pieces it continues unvaried.

M. de la Motte * has endeavoured to free the dramatic poets from that law, which the example of *Æschylus*, and other venerable ancients, seems to have imposed upon them. This celebrated partisan for the moderns, not unlike some sectaries, has not been content with declaring war against superstition only: all men of sense would have then joined with him. But, transported by the ardor of his zeal, he has demolished those remains of antiquity, which claim our highest regard. He has decry'd opinions that deserve to be held sacred; and in their room, has substituted notions which have long since been justly

* An ingenious Frenchman, famous for his literary paradoxes, and singular systems in all branches of polite learning. He was one of the wits of the age of *Lewis* the 14th, and had many disputes with his brethren on the subject of the ancients, to whom, like *Perrault*, he would allow very little merit.—His works are very numerous, and were published in 11 vols. 8vo.—His discourse upon *Homer* is esteemed a master-piece of eloquence.—*Biog. Dict.* 8vo. vol. viii.

exploded. The doctrines advanced by this ingenious innovator, are the more dangerous, because they sometimes carry with them a specious show of reason. Happy it is for church and state, they have nothing to fear from this pretended reformation. It may, indeed, produce a few innocent skirmishes, and these are often found to be more beneficial than peace.

From the theory of sensation it is certain, that the observance of these three unities is not derived from a mere arbitrary rule; since there is a degree of pleasure annexed to whatever enables the mind to form a clear idea of any object presented to its view.

We must, however, acknowledge, that, the pleasures of the heart being greatly superior to those of the mind, if a strict adherence to the three unities had no other advantage than that of giving a facility of apprehension, we might often transgress their rules, in order
to

to introduce a number of interesting events, such as would affect the tender feelings, and raise the emotions of the heart. But there is something more than this to be taken into consideration.

In the drama, whatever tends to make it less interesting, must be deemed an imperfection; and on the other hand, whatever contributes to preserve, and heighten the charm of illusion, is superlatively agreeable. If an old man acts the part of a youth, and a young one appears in the character of old age; if the decorations represent fields and meadows, when the scene is supposed to be in a palace; if the dresses are not suited to the dignity of the characters; these improprieties will certainly offend. We shall be equally disgusted when the unity of time, place, and action, is not observed. Suppose the principal action of a theatrical piece to be multiplied; several ages to pass away in

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the space of a few hours; and the spectators to be instantaneously transported from one country to another: all these absurdities will not fail to make us recollect that we are deceived, and will proclaim to us the folly of shedding real tears, for misfortunes which are altogether fictitious.

C H A P. V.

There is a pleasure annexed to all the emotions of the heart, when not imbittered with fear or hatred.

IT IS by means of the passions of love and hatred that we become strongly attached to what seems to be our good, while at the same time, we reject, and avoid whatever appears to be the contrary. These are the two springs which set all our faculties in motion, to secure the duration of our existence.

Hatred, and all the passions it gives birth to, are accompanied with a painful sensation, proceeding from the idea we conceive either of present or future misery. Their noxious quality infects our blood, and obstructs the course of perspiration. Nevertheless they diffuse through the human frame a peculiar

kind of sweetness, which tempers and allays their bitterness. The soul feels a pleasure in those passions, that are most suited to her present situation, and have a tendency to destroy whatever threatens her destruction. Such is the nature of our sensations: pleasure and pain make up their composition; and they become either agreeable or disagreeable, as the former or latter is most predominant.

There is a species of pleasure, engendered in the very bosom of hatred. The destruction of an enemy, is to some persons the height of good fortune. There are even men, to whose eye there cannot be a more delightful scene, than the downfall of any whom, before, they accounted happy. The prosperity of a neighbour increases their misery, but they are highly charmed with the removal of an object, that was once so offensive to their sight.

Yet, under all these malevolent pleasures, there lurks a secret misery, which is only

somewhat abated, while the sensation is for a while suspended. Thus every man, of an envious, or mischievous disposition, is naturally of a gloomy, and melancholy cast*.

Every other passion, from which hatred is excluded, is essentially agreeable. Even desire, though the child of indigence, to make use of *Plato's* expression, is accompany'd with pleasure. We, in some degree, enjoy what we hope for, though we do not always enjoy what we possess. There is more pleasure in being attracted by the motion of the heart towards any, the least object, than in possessing the greatest blessings, in a state of dull inactivity.

In hope consists the pleasure of novelty. Passionately desirous of agreeable sensations, we flatter ourselves we shall enjoy them in every unknown object. Truth herself is

* Caritate enim, benevolentiaque sublatâ, omnis est à vitâ sublata jucunditas. *Cicero de Amic.*

indebted to *novelty* for part of her lustre. She often allures the mind by the success of its researches, or captivates the heart by the advantages she seems to promise, but, in general, she ceases to attract when the truth is discovered: the secret charm that excited us to pursue knowledge, vanishes the moment we are possessed of it; and the real utility of that knowledge is then its only merit.

NOVELTY loses her charms with persons advanced in years; experience has taught them to distrust her flattering promises.

The pleasure of variety is ally'd to that of novelty. Amidst a number of different objects that present themselves to our view, there are always some which please by their novelty.

Such is the beauty of variety, and novelty, that we often prefer objects, in which they are conspicuous, to others, more conformable to the known, and established laws of order and proportion. We often leave with pleasure

the most regular gardens to walk in the open fields, and are more delighted with the natural song of the nightingale, than with any artificial note which it can be taught to repeat.

If love has charms, even in the uneasiness of desire, how much more, when free from the alloy of any unkindly passion. "How
"unhappy are the damned," said St. *Catherine*,
"they are no longer capable of loving."

Every tender emotion that we feel, of friendship, gratitude, generosity, and benevolence, is attended with a pleasing sensation; and we generally observe persons of a benevolent heart, to be naturally chearful and gay.

There have been devout visionaries, who have attempted to raise the mind to such a state of abstraction, as to wish for the continuance of their love of God, and the annihilation of that pleasure which they felt in loving him. But to separate the idea of pleasure from that of love, would be the same

as to take away roundness from the idea of a circle. Love is purely disinterested, when we have no other advantage in view, besides the pleasure that accompanies the act itself. The disinterestedness of the christian ought to advance thus far, but cannot proceed further.

As there have been divines, who imagined the soul capable of being wholly disinterested with regard to pleasure, so likewise, on the other hand, there have been philosophers, who have supposed it incapable of being influenced by any other motives, but those which take their rise from self-interest. In order to confute this notion, let us take a cursory view of the stage. The scenes there exhibited, though often calculated to corrupt the heart, are nevertheless sufficient to convince us that it is formed for virtue. Were it not so, what mean our tears at the fate of unfortunate heroes? What joy should we not feel, could we rescue them from impending ruin? Does this sympathy arise from

any tie of blood or friendship? Certainly not. But those heroes appear to be virtuous; and the seeds of benevolence are sown within us, always ready to spring up in favor of virtue and humanity, unless obstructed by passions of an evil tendency. We have, in history, a remarkable account of a bloody Grecian tyrant, who, being present at the representation of the *Hecuba* of *Euripides*, left the theatre, at the close of the first act, filled with a conscious shame, when he found himself bathed in tears, and unable to suppress that sensibility, for the manes of the Trojans, of which he was totally devoid, with respect to his own countrymen. Cruel, and unrelenting through interest, yet, by nature susceptible of the softer passions, he could not help paying to those illustrious heroes, from whom he had nothing to fear, the tribute of benevolence which was their due.

Since there is a pleasure annexed to every emotion of the soul, which springs from

benevolence, the ancients could not account those tragedies defective, in which our anxiety for the fate of a virtuous character, increasing to the catastrophe, is at length changed into joy upon finding the virtuous completely happy.

However, we must agree with *Aristotle* and his commentators, that as sorrow makes a deeper impression on the soul than pleasure, we are apt to be more intimately affected with the adversity of a virtuous hero, than with his prosperity. His happiness would have given us joy, it is true; but such is the magic power of tragedy, that we feel more sympathetic pleasure from his misfortunes: they affect us deeply;—and this grief becomes exquisitely pleasing, when the poet's art has allay'd our indignation, and given full scope to the exercise of our benevolence, whose secret charms are so powerful, as to convert grief into pleasure, and render tears more pleasing than smiles.

But from what miracle does it happen, that we are so agreeably entertained with certain tragical representations, which, had they been real facts, performed before our eyes, would have inspired us with the utmost horror?

The different position of the object is the cause of our feeling such different impressions. The more likely any misfortunes are to reach us, the greater is our dread of their becoming personal: but those which tragedy represents, are seen remotely; they do not alarm our self-love, but expand our benevolence in favor of virtuous characters.

These theatrical scenes, which point out to us the secret charm that accompanies the feelings of the heart, prove to us, likewise, that we cannot behold another's joy or sorrow, without partaking of his misery or happiness. To this sympathy, implanted by nature, are we indebted for the most endearing connexions of society; and poetry, painting, and eloquence derive from it their most powerful charms.

C H A P. VI.

*Of the beauty of the body, the mind, and
the soul.*

NATURE has not confined our knowledge to the sensation of our own personal qualities: those of others contribute likewise to our joy, or to our sorrow, according as these qualities are favorable, or repugnant to the existence of their possessors. Formed by nature to be members of society, we presently discern those, who stand in need of our assistance, and are at no loss to find out others, who are able to contribute to our welfare.

We cannot help being seized with an inward horror, when we behold a man with broken limbs, unseemly excrescencies, or a complexion of a deadly hue. On the contrary, a happy temperature of the blood is

shown by an agreeable color of the face; and the organs, which, without having any superfluity, possess every thing necessary for the due execution of their office, are characterized by an agreeable turn of the features.

Some parts of the body, as the forehead, are susceptible of different forms, which equally answer the purpose they are designed for. Their beauty is, in that case, arbitrary. Thus in Egypt, and in Syria, a favorable prepossession adorned features, which had no other excellence, but a slight resemblance to those of *Alexander* and *Cleopatra*.

The idea of beauty varies, according as it is estimated in different countries. It shines forth in the *Farnesian Hercules*, as well as in the *Venus of Medicis*. It is discoverable, even in the wrinkled, austere brow of the *Moses* of *Michael Angelo*. Thus, in each sex, and in every age of life, a peculiar beauty is annexed to a regular conformation of the features.

There are some climates, barren of regular beauties, where the idea of the beautiful does not consist in what really is so, but in what is the least ugly or deformed.

To a dispassionate spectator, the ornaments of the mind afford an entertainment, still more pleasing than any beauty of external figure; and nothing but envy or hatred can prevent us from beholding with pleasure, the lively, penetrating mind, which views, and comprehends an object in all its relations, and compares them with its own actual situation.

GRACEFULNESS strikes more agreeably than the beauty of the body. It is, as it were, a transparent veil, through which the mind may be discovered. It consists in a propriety of attitude, and gesture, of motion, expression, and thought, adapted to some end proposed; and those means of attaining that end are the more agreeable, because there is great delicacy and ease requisite to put them in practice.

The beauty of the genius, and of the understanding, however brilliant, is eclipsed by the superior beauty of the soul. The most luxuriant fallies of wit are not to be compared with the genuine lustre of those charms which are conspicuous in a brave, disinterested, and benevolent soul. Mankind will in all ages applaud the noble humanity of *Titus*, who lamented the loss of that time which he had not employed in making his fellow-creatures happy. Our theatres will ever applaud the magnanimity of that * high-priest, who had the fear of God, and no other fear; and will resound in praise of that unfortunate heroine, who, when deserted by all, and asked if she had any resource in her misery, replied, “In
“ *myself*, and that is sufficient.”

These shining beauties of the soul, inspire us sometimes with a warm affection even for the dead. Whence comes it, that *Plutarch*,

* Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, & n'ai point d'autre crainte. *Racine's Athalie*.

in his *Parallels*, has a power over his readers which no other historian can boast of? Every time we read him, we are delighted with equal pleasure. The reason is, because he gives us a kind of history of the greatness of the human soul.

There have been men, celebrated for their knowledge of the human heart, who imagined the pleasure we feel from the beauty of the soul, to be only a secret joy, springing from self-love, when we perceive in others such qualities as are favorable to ourselves. But the beauty of the soul is no less independent of self-interest, than that of the body. A traitor is detested, even by the nation whom he has saved by his perfidy. A spendthrift appears ridiculous to the very man whom he enriches by his extravagance. On the other hand, a stranger, nay the very dead, strike us with admiration by a virtuous action, from which self-love cannot hope for any advantage: and perhaps we may admire greatness
and

and courage even in an enemy, though at the same time we may be in some degree intimidated.

It is with the beauty of the soul, as with that of the body. It marks out qualities the best adapted to the existence of those who possess them. What can be more favorable to the weak condition of man, than a diffusive benevolence, which engages the interests of mankind in our service: and what can be more desirable than a spirit of resolution in extreme danger, which finds within itself a resource superior to all the attacks of fortune?

But, if this greatness of soul derives its chief excellence, and merit, from its power of contributing to our preservation; to what reason are we to ascribe, that it never shines with greater lustre, than in those who fall a sacrifice to the faithful discharge of their duty? It is, because the pleasure we feel from this greatness of soul in others, does not result from our own reflection on its

tendency to their preservation; but from a strong impression, marked by the hand of nature, which subsists independent of all personal situations. The general laws of nature are never suspended, not even though particular circumstances might seem to render them unnecessary. Besides that, it is reason and religion, applauding the act as great and meritorious, which spread a lustre over this dearest sacrifice in the cause of virtue.

The air of the face, and of the whole person, sometimes brings into one point of view, all these different species of beauty. There is a certain analogy, which the external figure preserves with the qualities that characterize the disposition of the soul, the mind, and the body.

The happy conformation of the organs, is denoted by an air of freedom and boldness; that of the fluids, by an air of vivacity and briskness: an air of delicacy is, as it were, a spark which proceeds from a fine imagination;

an air of softness denotes complacency ; a majestic air indicates a sublimity of sentiment ; a tender sweetness promises a return of friendship.

All these different airs are agreeable, not only from the qualities which they express, but also from the sensations which they excite in the spectator.

And to the secret relation they bear to our own particular disposition, are we to assign the workings of *sympathy*. It is often with persons, as with places and objects. What pleases the most, does not for that reason always deserve to please. Gloomy places, from whence all joy is banished, have nevertheless particular charms in the imagination of those, who are under the impression of a deep melancholy ; they reject whatever seems to forbid the indulgence of their excessive grief.

This secret affinity, or relation to our particular dispositions, often creates pleasure out

of an object disagreeable in itself; the beauty of which, though undiscoverable by others, affords to us an exquisite satisfaction. A new born infant appears rather loathsome to mankind in general, but is the most delightful of all objects to the parent. Nature has stamped an impression of pleasure, not only, on whatever contributes to preserve, but also, on what tends to perpetuate our existence. And the most perfect beauty would make but a slender impression on the soul, were it not that nature has constituted this quality to be an allurement, which invites us to immortalize our species.

Those animals, whose beauty pleases, derive it chiefly from the brightness of their colors, the gracefulness which they appear to have in their motions, and from the sensations they seem to express by their air.

C H A P. VII.

On harmony of style.

HARMONY of style requires a particular consideration; and I am in hopes of being able to trace it to its source, with the assistance of the ancients, who have investigated this subject, with greater accuracy and precision than the moderns.

The masters of Athens and of Rome received law from a people, the delicacy of whose ear they were obliged to flatter. Ambition, in their time, rendered such studies honorable, as in ours are considered only as the minute, critical refinements of grammar. But it shall be the part of philosophy to ennoble them, provided they can elucidate the laws of sensation, and make us sensible, to what useful purposes their beneficent author has designed them.

The sounds which compose a discourse, may be considered,

1st. In themselves.

2dly. In regard to those which precede.

3dly. In respect to the number of syllables that compose a word.

4thly. In respect to the ideas which the words convey.

These four different relations are so many sources of pleasure.

Mr. *de la Motte* was of opinion, that words were no further pleasing to the ear, than as they conveyed ideas to the mind. But shall we pay greater regard to his authority, than to our own internal sensation, and to that of all mankind? No, certainly. There are sounds, smooth and agreeable in themselves; and others which are harsh: some, by their union, form harmony, and others, discord. In short, the combination of sounds is either pleasing or harsh, according to its variety or uniformity.

The organs of speech are, in some measure, associated with those of hearing. There are nerves that form a communication, and preserve a mutual interest between them: thus it is, that sounds pronounced with difficulty, give pain to the hearer.

The different structure of the organs of speech and hearing, is the cause why sounds, that are harsh and grating to persons of delicacy, are not so to the rough and uncivilized. I shall not enlarge further on this theory, which the ancient, as well as modern rhetoricians, have so deeply inquired into.

Sounds, when considered as words, acquire a sort of harmony, when they are placed in the order which is most favorable to the memory. If in a period, there is a word longer than the rest, and consequently, more difficult to be retained, it should, if possible, be placed the last in the sentence. It will then have a greater influence on the

memory; and we can then recollect the whole more easily. This appears evident, from the facility with which children repeat the last words of a discourse.

The best Greek and Roman writers have followed this rule, so far as it was compatible with the order of their ideas. The ancient rhetoricians and grammarians have expressly laid it down as a maxim, *In verbis observandum est ne à majoribus ad minora descendat oratio; melius enim dicitur vir est optimus quam vir optimus est* *.

I must here, however, observe, that in the French language, sentences often terminate agreeably, with several monosyllables following each other, because they seem to the ear as one and the same word.

Such is the structure of the fibres of the ear, that they often feel what escapes the knowledge of the mind, or the understanding.

* Diomed. l. 2. de structurâ perfectæ orationis.

The author * of the French prosody has remarked, that syllables which are short in that language, become long at the end of a sentence. Our ancestors were sensible, that the latter part of a sentence being long, was pleasing to the ear, and have therefore had the ingenuity to vary the pronunciation of the same word. Thus it is that *votre*, which is always short, becomes long, when it closes a sentence: *Je suis votre serviteur, & moi le vôtre.*

When we consider sounds in relation to the ideas which they express, they form a species of harmony, according as they are long or short, rapid or slow, smooth or harsh, adorned or simple, striking the ear with a sensation, analogous to that which they convey to the mind.

Every sensation has a style, as well as tone peculiar to itself.

* Abbé Olivet.

The deepest sorrow is best expressed by silence; and there is not a more palpable incongruity, than pompous language uttered by a person in the agony of distress.

When sorrow is moderate, the consolation and sympathy of a friend give relief, but the depression which attends it, leaves not strength sufficient for the display of long periods, nor will it admit of sonorous cadences, or labored ornaments. Chaplets of flowers ill become the garb of sorrow.

Joy, when it is arrived to a pitch of excess, would be as unutterable as sorrow. The soul being then penetrated with a sensation the most exquisitely pleasing, would reject every object that seemed capable of diverting her attention, or of disturbing her felicity. But a situation of this kind very rarely occurs. Our joy is most commonly moderate, and we love to multiply it, by sharing it with our friends. Our discourse at such a time, however prolix, does not appear so to ourselves, whilst

we endeavour to communicate to others what we feel within our own breasts. A brisk circulation of the blood, during this period of exultation, furnishes the organs of speech with all their necessary vigor, and a luxuriant, smiling imagination, converts every object that presents itself into a golden vision. The most florid expressions, and the most crowded periods, are the natural language of joy, and of all the passions over which she presides.

But however eloquent joy may be, anger is still more. The care of self-preservation inspires us with greater vigilance for the prevention of evil, than in the pursuit of any good. We then implore the assistance of every being; we then wish to arm the whole universe against the object of our hatred, and imagine every thing we meet with ought to be the instrument of our vengeance. The boldest metaphors, and the longest periods, are scarcely sufficient to express all our sensations. Thus it was that *Pericles*, when

exasperated against *Megara*, stormed, thundered, and set all Greece on fire. There are no orations, in which eloquence appears with greater lustre, than in those which have flowed from the anger of *Demosthenes* and *Cicero*.

Sounds, considered in relation to what they express, form also a pleasing harmony to the mind, when every idea is ranged in an order suited to its importance, and that which is most necessary to be retained, is placed the last in the sentence.

It sometimes happens, that the pleasure of the ear is in opposition to that of the mind, and the most important idea is expressed in the shortest word. Must we then, as it were, refuse it the place of honor, or be under the necessity of crowding the period with an useless encumbrance? certainly not. This would be, to make our court to the maid, in preference to the mistress. Sounds must, at all events, be sacrificed to ideas. Sterling thought is so greatly superior to all the

comparatively tinsel ornaments of style, that a judicious writer will consider them, as a wise man esteems the favors of fortune: he accepts them when offered, but when they fly from him, he disdains to pursue them.

There is no sentence, whether consisting of one or more parts, but what is susceptible of the different species of harmony of which I have been speaking. An elevated style has a cadence peculiar to itself, arising from the relation the several members of a sentence have to each other. Cicero has the following passage on this subject: *Si membra in extremo breviora sunt, infringitur ille quasi verborum ambitus (sic enim has orationis conversiones Græci nominant;) quare aut paria esse debent posteriora superioribus, extrema primis, aut quod etiam est melius & jucundius, longiora; atque hæc quidem ab iis philosophis quos tu maxime diligis, Catule, dicta sunt, quod eò sæpius testificor, ut authoribus laudandis ineptiarum crimen effugiam*.*

* De Orator. l. 3. cap. 103.

Something may be gathered from this passage, very applicable to our own language. Let us imitate our poets, who, though they cannot transplant the Greek and Roman versification into their poetry, have yet learnt from it the art of pleasing the ear by harmonious proportions. We may also learn from *Cicero*, or rather from the Greeks, whose interpreter he professes himself to be, that in all languages, full and harmonious periods may be composed, either by the symmetry of their parts, or by their gradation.

Quintilian observes, that poetry first took its rise from the pleasure occasioned by these symmetrical proportions. But they are not confined to poetry alone. They furnish rhetoric with many of her figures, and however trivial these may appear, orators have made use of them to the greatest advantage. Of this we have a remarkable instance recorded in history. * *Gorgias*, the Sicilian, was the

* *Diod.* l. 12.

first who applied himself to the study of these *minutiæ* of eloquence. Being sent on an embassy to Athens by his countrymen, the Leontines, to ask assistance against a neighbouring power, he harangued the Athenians in a discourse, which abounded in all the harmony of measure, a nice opposition and agreement of sound, and an artful arrangement of ideas. They were struck with admiration : and he prevailed upon them, as much by the beauty of his figures, as by the force of his arguments, to enter into an alliance with his countrymen.

GRADATION, in the different members of a period, is still more agreeable than their symmetry. By this means art is better concealed, and at the same time is more diversified. As in the arrangement of words, as well as syllables, the ear is pleased when the longest terminate the sentence, so the members of a period, by being disposed in like manner, cannot fail to yield a similar

pleasure. Some examples may not be improper by way of illustration. Mr. *Flecher* says,

*Les plaintes de ceux qui souffrent
Remplissent l'ame d'une tristesse importune.*

I think it is evident, that every period formed on this model, must be always agreeable to the ear.

Mr. *Bossuet*, speaking of a queen of England, expresses himself thus:

*Issue de tant de rois,
Son grand cœur surpassa sa naissance.*

The ear is no less delighted with the cadence of the sounds, than the mind with the grandeur of the idea.

The explication of the structure of periods, consisting of two members, comprehends almost the whole theory of the full and copious style.

It is generally the close of a sentence that determines

determines its beauty. The recent impression of the two last members, seems to efface that of the preceding. However, though periods of more than two members do not require a measured gradation, they have additional beauty whenever this circumstance occurs. Take the following example.

Mr. *Flecher* thus speaks of *Montecuculli*, who was about to retreat.

Déjà prenoit l'effor,
pour se sauver vers les montagnes,
cet aigle, dont le vol hardi avoit d'abord
effrayé nos provinces.

We may observe, that gradation in the members of a period has so pleasing an effect, that to gain this advantage, we are often inclined to reverse the natural order of the words.

There are some other examples which I shall borrow from *Cicero*. We need but to look into his orations, to meet with the most

perfect and harmonious periods. This great orator, in order to prove that *Cecilius* could not, with any propriety, be the accuser of *Verres*, asks if it would become him to say, *I accuse him.*

*Quicum quæstor fueram,
quicum me fors consuetudoque majorum,
quicum me deorum hominumque judicium
conjunxerat.*

The Roman people, says he in the same oration, have many pledges of my strict justice in the accusation of *Verres*.

Habet honorem quem petimus—

That was the *Ædileship*.

Habet spem quam propositam nobis habemus—

That was the *Consulship*.

*Habet existimationem multo sudore, labore, vigilisque
collectam.*

When the ideas, as well as the members of a period, rise by a sort of gradual progression,

they form together a harmony, at once grateful to the ear, and agreeable to the mind.

There are other periods, which, though perfect in their kind, are composed of equal members, with one that is unequal. This, if the least, presents itself first.

Thus Cicero makes *Africa* give testimony to the valor of *Pompey*.

Testis est Africa,

quæ magnis oppressa hostium copiis,

eorum ipsorum sanguine redundavit.

If the unequal member is the greatest, it ought to close the period, as in that of *Crassus*, which Cicero has preserved, and which, he assures us, charmed all the people of Rome.

Eripite nos ex miseriis,

Eripite nos ex faucibus eorum,

Quorum crudelitas nostro sanguine non potest expleri.

If we change the order of these periods, we shall easily perceive that, by so doing,

we destroy the gradation which constitutes their harmony.

Thus it is that the Greek and Roman languages, besides the peculiar harmony, resulting from the combination of long and short syllables, have also another kind of beauty, of which, indeed, all languages are susceptible*. And this consists in the arrangement of the different members of a period, according to their respective lengths.

We may, therefore, readily admit the truth of what *Cicero* says; that the oratorical style has its certain, determinate measure, and is distinguished from poetry, by the privilege it has of either lengthening or shortening its members, by the addition or retrenchment of a few syllables.

* Similar to this, is the observation of *Vossius* on rhyme in poetry. *Consuetudinem hanc servant* (says he) *non Arabes tantum, & Persæ, & Afri, sed & Tartari & Sineses, & complures quoque Americanæ gentes; ut dubitari vix possit, quin ipsa natura unà cum cantu hanc poesios rationem mortalibus tradiderit*—See p. 21. above.

But perhaps there are some persons who, insensible to this kind of music, will deny the existence of the sensation itself, because nature has refused it to themselves. How shall we be able to convince them of their error; or by what means can we demonstrate to a blind man the nature of colors? This task, however, we must undertake, and endeavour to prove, that periods, in every language, may acquire a beauty and harmony, from the symmetrical order, and gradation of their members.

By a period, we mean a sentence composed of several parts, which have not a complete or perfect sense, but when they are united together; and in order to their being pronounced with ease and gracefulness, they must separately be distinguished by a proper cadence of the voice. We know that objects in general, those, for instance, that are subject to the rules of architecture, please, when their parts are so regularly proportioned, as

to admit of one comprehensive view; and when those parts are adapted to the end of their destination. These are the principles of all the fine arts, and upon them is founded the harmony of periods. There is no sentence whose members may not have this striking proportion. They may be separated from each other by the cadence of the voice, and their length can be varied at pleasure. In like manner, they are susceptible of a relation to a proposed end. The object of discourse is to make impression upon the memory. When the members of a period are equal, they are fixed in the mind, and are easily retained, being thus linked together in close connexion. If they are unequal, the best method of arrangement will be, to assign the last place to the longest members, as the most difficult to be retained. It must therefore be evident to every one, who has considered the laws of sensation, that a period will always please the ear,

by the symmetry, as well as gradation, of its members.

I will resume this whole theory in one proposition.

* By harmony of style, we understand the pleasing effect, arising from a certain order in the arrangement of the different parts of a sentence. This order will be always grateful to the ear, when symmetry is preserved, without any violation to the sense; and when the last place in the period is assigned to the most important ideas, the most sonorous expressions, or to the longest words and members.

But there are some periods, full and flowing, which are exceptions to this general rule; and though their last members may

* Poetæ questionem attulerunt, quidnam esset illud quo ipsi differrent ab oratoribus: numero maxime videbantur—nunc apud oratores numerus jam ipse increbuit: quidquid est enim quod sub aurium mensuram aliquam cadit, numerus vocatur. *Cic. de Orat.*

not be so long as the preceding one, their proportion is in other respects so exact, as to compensate for the want of gradation.

M. Fenelon says of Calypso,

*Dans sa douleur,
elle se trouvoit malheureuse,
d'être immortelle.*

The first and the last member in this sentence are equal; and if taken both together, are equal to that which separates them. This species of relative harmony affords a pleasure to the ear, not inferior to a continued proportion, especially, as with the advantage of variety, it has that of being easily comprehended by the memory. The rule and the exception are alike founded on the same principle.

Before I conclude this chapter, I will consider an opinion, advanced by Mr. de la Motte. "There are some persons," says this author, "who will not allow to orators the

“ use of those measures, which poets; have
 “ appropriated to themselves. But is it not
 “ absurd to think, they should be disagreeable
 “ in prose, when they are delightful in
 “ poetry? Can the same order of sounds
 “ operate upon the ear by two opposite sen-
 “ sations? Those measures cannot in reality
 “ be displeasing, and it is caprice alone that
 “ has excluded them from prose.”

But who is this small number of persons
 that have condemned what Mr. *de la Motte*
 has attempted to justify? Why all nations
 who have cultivated eloquence. And can we
 imagine that mankind, in general, have been
 so far influenced by caprice, as to conspire
 to form, in opposition to nature, a disagree-
 able sensation out of nothing?

Let us acquiesce in the universal judgment
 of all, and endeavour to trace out the cause
 of an indubitable fact.

A succession of periods in prose in exact
 measure, is offensive to the ear, but in verse

there is nothing more delightful. The poet is both musician and orator. He ought to be equally attentive to please the ear, and to touch the heart. But the orator addresses himself chiefly to the understanding. We accept his flowers, it is true, if he has culled them in his way, but if he has left his road, in quest of them, we disdain the far-fetched ornaments.

It is not a succession of measured periods alone that is disagreeable in prose: a single verse creates deformity. Those who have studied the theory of music, are of opinion, that by the proportions which regulate the agreement of consonance, the *fourth* ought to be more agreeable than it is, but that the relation which forms the *fourth* is of such a nature as to recal the idea of the *fifth*, which, coming so close upon the *fourth*, destroys the pleasure of it, and makes it in some measure disappear. May it not be nearly the same with a verse that is part of a period;

and may it not, in some degree, be harsh, because it brings to mind a harmony superior to that of prose. All the parts of a whole ought, by their respective beauties, to form, as it were, one united concert, and be disposed in such a manner as not to eclipse, or efface, each other. When we see a florid expression introduced into a simple style, we are apt to think of an elegant piece of furniture in a mean apartment; and the case appears to be the same in respect to the ear, when a verse makes part of a period.

But whence comes it, that verses cited in prose have so agreeable an effect? why do they not bring to mind the idea of a harmony superior to that of prose? It is because they are detached parts, of a different construction, and do not seem to promise a succession of the like harmony. If a person in a plain dress should expose to view a rich piece of embroidery; the contrast would not be offensive to the sight; but to see his coat patched with

it, would excite our ridicule. And, besides, the more disproportionate the objects are, which are thus brought together, the greater will the absurdity appear. We must, however, allow that the harmony of versification is not so highly superior to that of periods, as utterly to exclude verse from having any place in prose, nor ought we to account such an introduction any considerable blemish. On the contrary, *Socrates*, *Cicero*, and other eminent writers, have not scrupled to admit it, rather than sacrifice a happy mode of expression to a strict prosaic uniformity.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the pleasure annexed to liberal, and virtuous qualities.

BESIDES those objects that are in themselves agreeable, there are others which become so from the pleasure they either promise or procure. In this second class there are none more important, than such liberal and virtuous endowments, as tend to give an idea of perfection.

Those qualities of the body, of the mind, and of the soul, whose beauty is eminently striking, when we perceive them in others, form likewise our own perfection when they belong to ourselves; and whatever proves to us the possession of them is accompanied with an agreeable sensation. It is this pleasure we feel in believing ourselves perfect, that renders flattery a poison, and praise an incitement to virtue.

Grandeur and variety in objects, sublimity of thought and sentiment, derive their principal charms from the testimony they give us of the greatness of the human genius.

An object, represented by a picture or statue, is more pleasing than when reflected in a piece of water. The invisible pencil that sketches out the design on the liquid element flatters only the eye; but painting and sculpture, by animating the canvass and marble, gratify at once our vanity and self-love, by a reflection, which ought rather to mortify our pride. For what can one man perform, that another cannot attain to, by means of ingenious art and unwearied industry? Besides the natural perfection which consists in the possession of those qualities that tend to our preservation, there is likewise a moral perfection annexed to those qualities which seem to promise a lasting happiness.

But this idea is the creature of our own fancy, and is composed of the different

materials that are wrought in us by education, temperament, society, and our own reflection:—Such indeed is the melancholy privilege of man, that the bewitching magic of this idea can give a lustre to what degrades our nature, and a pleasing aspect to what tends to render us miserable. It even makes us sacrifice life to the most ridiculous prejudices, and exalts this frenzy into heroism.

People in general are apt to form to themselves an idea of perfection in an assemblage of qualities which are entirely foreign to man; an absurd error this, easy to be detected by reason, and yet so mighty is its power and influence, that it prevails over the most reasonable persons.

Confucius and *Zeno* have placed perfection in the exercise of our faculties, adapted to the nature of our existence. We are by nature sociable and intelligent beings. We are then perfect, when truth directs our judgment, and equity regulates our actions.

Pythagoras, and *Socrates*, as well as the divines of all religions, believed, that the perfection of man (and of all the works of reasonable beings) depended upon the right use of the human faculties, and upon their conformity with the design of the great Creator.

According to *Epicurus*, man is perfect when the whole tenor of his thoughts and actions leads him, by the shortest and easiest road, to the end he has in view; and that end is his own felicity.

These three different ideas of moral perfection may be naturally blended together, and indeed ought not to be separated. It consists in the possession of such qualities and habits of the soul as tend to procure us solid happiness, consistent with the gracious intention of our Creator, which is imprinted in the very nature of our being.

The perfection of the soul must be estimated by our internal principles, which give birth
to

to so many pleasing and painful sensations.—
 We arrive at a higher degree of perfection,
 according as the mind is unbiassed by error,
 and can with ease comprehend, and set forth
 the beauty of truth; in proportion as the soul
 is uncorrupt in its taste, and is free from the
 seeds of envy, melancholy, and discontent;
 according as it regulates its desires by the
 standard of a clear and certain judgment;
 the object of which is not the transitory gra-
 tification of one particular faculty, but the
 solid happiness of the whole man, considered
 in all his relations, and throughout the whole
 period of his existence.

The same qualities, which, in ourselves,
 we account moral perfections, form beauty
 of manners, when considered as belonging
 to others. And as in works of art, the exact
 correspondence of the means with the end,
 is an embellishment, so likewise the actions
 of a virtuous man, directed to one certain
 end and purpose, adapted to his sphere

and abilities, must be a pleasing object of contemplation.

Diotimus, a character well known in the banquet of *Plato*, had therefore great reason to beg that *Socrates* would open and refine his ideas, and form his taste for the beautiful. That man is in some degree virtuous, who is willing to pay to virtue the homage of respect which is its due.

But unfortunately for mankind, opinion, whose influence over personal beauty is so great, has still greater power in directing the judgment upon moral beauty.

Our idea of perfection is entirely dependent on the principles of religion and morality, which we have either received from others, or have formed to ourselves. These are sometimes apt to deceive us, often tarnish a real greatness of soul, and give a false lustre to the wildest fanaticism.

It is from the idea of perfection that friendship borrows its charms. *Epicurus* and

other philosophers imagined, that it had its source in our inability to procure the necessaries and conveniencies of life, without the assistance of others. But if there is such a link that connects our mutual interests, there is likewise another principle of a more exalted nature. This leads us to consider, not so much the advantages we may receive from others, as the proofs they give us of their own perfection. The liberality of *Claudius*, said *Passienus*, I account more valuable than his friendship; but the friendship of *Augustus* is to me more precious than his bounty *.

The charms of grandeur consist not, as Mr. *Paschal* seems to think, in excluding thought and reflection. They are owing to another cause. Every object that surrounds the great, inces-

* *Seneca de Benef.*

fantly contributes to embellish and heighten the idea they have of themselves.

Most of those vices that degrade us are indulged, only because they flatter. We fondly hope to receive, from an external appearance of perfection, that inward satisfaction which can only flow from real perfection. Foolish mortals! An imaginary phantom can make upon us the strongest impression; and whatever presents itself to our view in the exterior form of strength, ability, or goodness, appears to us with the most endearing charms.

It is this chimerical idea of perfection that gives a value to revenge. *Aristotle* has proved by various instances, that when we are equally exasperated against several enemies, and have taken a signal vengeance upon one, this will blunt the edge of resentment against the others. In that case we have given one proof of our power, and are the less eager to seek for a second.

But pride, in order to flatter us, has no need to display our own perfections. Whatever contributes to sink others, tends to raise us, by the comparison we make of their condition with our own. The faults and disgraces of other men, are to us matter of pleasantry, unless they become objects of our compassion. We have by nature a tender sympathy for the misfortunes of others, when they appear considerable; but if they are slight, we love to enjoy this kind of superiority, which arises when we find ourselves exempt from such afflictions.

All enjoyment would be banished out of society, were we not to admit of that innocent raillery, which uses the weapon of ridicule in mirth and gaiety, without malice; but we cannot approve of those who love to dwell upon the imperfections of others. This ill-natured propensity betrays a real depravity of the heart. Can we call that

great which is formed out of the littleness of others?

It is with our perfection as with every thing else that is capable of proof. It is proved to us, not only by the evidence of our own sensations, but also by the authority of others.

There are few men, who have a sufficient stock either of virtue or of vanity, to be content with the inward approbation of the heart. Even our self-esteem is but slender, when it is not joined to the applause of others.

The esteem of other men not only flatters us, by the favorable idea which it gives of our personal qualities; it persuades us also, that others consider our happiness as making a part of their own; and such is our mutual connexion with, and dependence on each other, that there is scarcely a man who is not able to disturb our felicity; as on the other hand, there

are many who have it in their power to promote and enlarge it. What can be more happy for us in our present weak state, than the public esteem, which discovers in all around us an inclination to favor our wishes? an object, indeed, so flattering, that many prefer the phantom of reputation to real and intrinsic merit.

But if the esteem of mankind has no other allurements, but as it is a pledge of our happiness, whence comes it, that we endeavour to procure this happiness by the sacrifice of life itself? History has immortalized many Greeks and Romans, who devoted themselves to certain death, and whose sole ambition was that of exchanging life for the praise of posterity. Strange, that men who had but dark and imperfect notions of a future state, should meet destruction, in order to procure a chimerical happiness.

This heroic principle, according to *Cicero*, took its rise in a secret hope of enjoying a

reputation which would extend beyond the grave. To this we may add, that it is not impossible but these celebrated heroes may have been more happy by their death, than they would have been by the continuance of life. Pleased with the thoughts of being admired by their friends and countrymen; persuaded they should be no less so by their posterity; even by their very enemies, and all mankind; and these ideas being likewise heightened by a warm and lively imagination, formed an object so enchanting, though of short duration, as to counterbalance a succession of agreeable sensations, interwoven in the course of a long life.

C H A P. IX.

Of the modifications of the brain, which precede or accompany agreeable sensations.

SO far I have endeavoured to trace out the source of pleasure, in the soul, or in the organs of sensation, according to their different modifications. There are others in the brain similar and corresponding, the traces of which are retained by the memory. Is it possible to lay open this mystery? Here, indeed, nature has covered herself with a veil, which no mortal will be able to remove. But though we cannot expect to arrive at a clear knowledge in this matter, let us not renounce the pleasure of conjecture, especially since the analogy of nature often throws a light where experience fails. We may form some idea of the impression made

on the brain, by that on the organs of the senses, which are, as it were, its branches or extensions. We have reason then to believe, that an agreeable object puts the fibres of the brain in motion, without weakening or exhausting them; on the contrary, whatever is displeasing, hurts, and whatever tires, leaves them in a state of inactivity.

Let us not be surpris'd that grandeur and variety have so many charms; they communicate an agreeable motion to a great number of fibres in the brain.

Novelty is alone sufficient to render agreeable what, in itself, is not so, because it strikes forcibly on a fibre of the brain which was at rest. We may judge of its power if we consider, that the most sovereign medicines are ineffectual, and the most destructive poisons impotent, when taken by persons to whom use has made them familiar.

It is not only from the degree of motion in the fibres of the brain that pleasure arises;

it proceeds chiefly from the relation which the different motions bear to each other. We are indebted for this observation to the theory of music. That harmony is the most pleasing, in which the vibrations that form it do most often unite together. The same analogy that discovers a kind of echo in the brain, which pleases by the repetition of sound, proves likewise, that there are similar echoes in our other sensations. There is no object then, which does not make an agreeable impression, when its parts excite such vibrations in different fibres of the brain, as harmonize and are connected with each other. Symmetry, measure, proportion, imitation, and the relation of the means to one end and principal object, are all so many different sources of pleasure, because they are a sort of *consonance*, formed by motions which are connected, and which mutually assist each other.

But why do those qualities that form the

beauty of the body, the mind, and the soul, strike us so agreeably, when we do not perceive their secret tendency to be any way useful, which constitutes their real merit? The pleasure arising from thence has its source in the wisdom which nature has shown in the formation of man. We are separated from each other by self-love, but we are, notwithstanding, all members of the same body. Every man has a distinct motion, of which his personal interest is the centre, and all these particular motions form one grand and universal movement, which has the general good for its centre.

The principal mean employ'd by nature to establish and preserve human society, is the distribution of the same good and evil in common among mankind; or, in other words, by grafting in our nature that *sympathetic* principle, which never fails to act, unless obstructed by more powerful self-love. A person of a delicate frame cannot

see another with a wounded limb, without feeling in the same part a kind of counterpart of the wound; and though the impression may not be so forcible in a man of a more robust constitution, it is not the less real.

The sensations occasioned by distress and affliction, are not the only contagious ones; our gaiety and chearfulness may likewise be communicated to others.

It appears then, that those valuable qualities which form the beauty of the body, the understanding, and the soul, make an impression on the spectator, because they excite a motion in the brain, which tends to communicate them, and which would always have this effect, unless prevented by particular dispositions.

It has been said that geometry presided in the formation of the heavens; and it may with equal justice be affirmed, that harmony presided in the construction of the

brain. The amazing power of music in some particular distempers, gives us reason to believe that the brain is a kind of instrument furnished with chords, composed of a number of nervous fibres of different tensions, and consequently susceptible of an infinite variety of vibrations. They communicate their motions by the assistance of the eyes and ears. This they do more easily in proportion as they consist of a greater number of chords in *unison*, or as the chords of some communicate their motion with greater force to others.

Do not we see that fathers, princes, and celebrated men, as well as persons of a strong imagination, exercise almost a despotic sway over our sensations. Nothing can equal the facility with which those who have mutual love imbibe and communicate the very same ideas.

There are souls who at once attract each other with greater force than the loadstone

draws iron. Actors on the stage, when they laugh, or shed tears, affect us with the same sensations which they express.

But by what mechanism do the vibrations of the fibres of the brain transmit themselves to that of another person? The theory of sounds throws some light on this mystery. Sound reaches us, because the fibres in sonorous bodies, the particles or portions of air, the fibres of the ear, and lastly, those of the brain, form, as it were, a continued chain of chords in unison.

Mr. *de Mairan*, in order to explain this transmission, or communication, has conjectured that the air consists of an infinite number of particles, each of which has a particular elasticity. We may apply this ingenious notion to light. In the visual ray which appears to the sight an indivisible line, the mind, as a microscope, easily perceives an infinite number of different parts. In like manner, when the motions

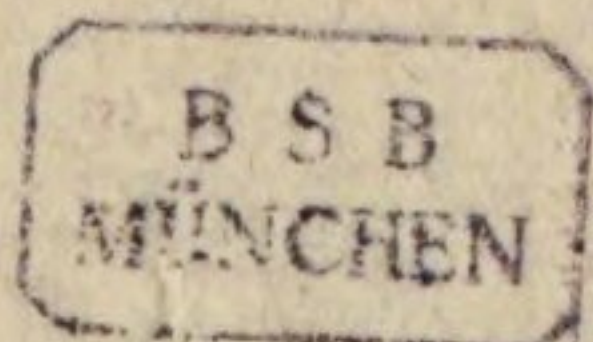
of the body, the color of the face, and the direction of the eye, point out to others the state of our soul, we have great reason to conclude, there is a chain of chords in unison, which extends itself to the spectator, and thus communicates the vibrations of one brain to that of another.

In order to finish this sketch of the theory of sensations, we will endeavour to point out that particular part of the brain, which is the seat of pain and of pleasure; which receives the impression from outward objects, and acts, in consequence thereof, upon our organs. This part must have strength and solidity, since the characters imprinted there cannot be effaced in a series of years. This nervous membrane must touch the extremity of every nerve belonging to sensation, in order to receive all the different impressions of it; and must likewise have a power over every one that is susceptible of motion, so as to be able to communicate thereto its
own

own motions, arising from the vibrations which it feels. All these different properties are united in the membrane, called the *pia mater*, which envelopes the whole mass of the brain, strongly adheres to it, and by its various folds and duplicatures produces a considerable number of multiplied waving partitions, which affect all the contiguous parts, and make their way into the most secret and internal seat of the brain.

However, if it be true, that in some cases the loss of a considerable part of the *pia mater* has not destroyed the faculties of sensation, we may hence infer, that this nervous membrane is not the object of our present inquiry. But we cannot, unless by some melancholy accidents, arrive at a certainty in this matter.

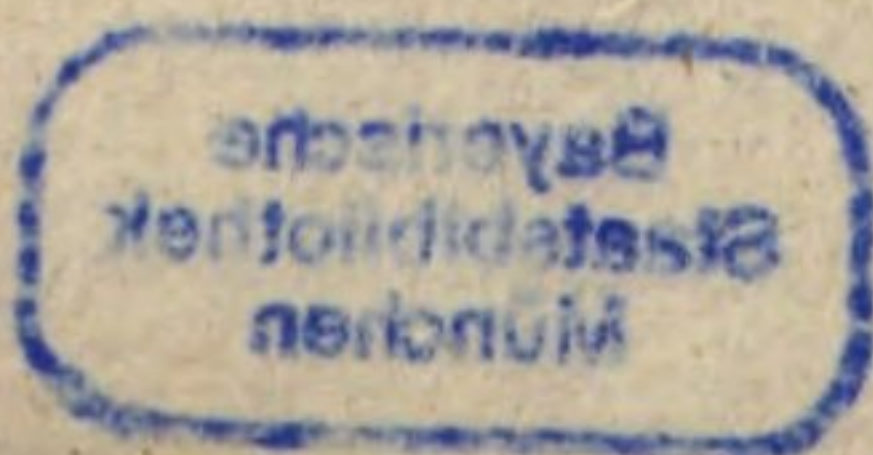
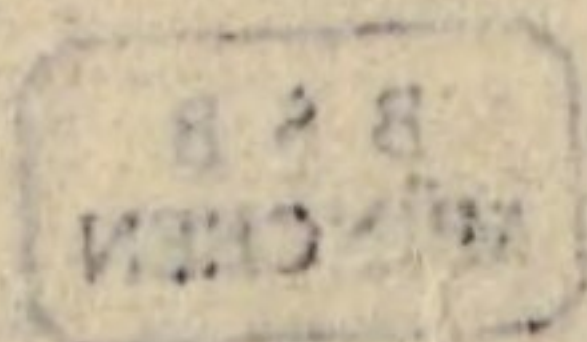
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C H A P. X.

The laws of sensation prove a supreme Being.

WHEN the study of anatomy came to be cultivated, mankind discovered that the size and strength of each muscle was proportioned to the bone to which it was joined. Some anatomists, struck with admiration at this wise contrivance, urged against the Epicureans, that if according to their doctrine, a blind power or chance had produced the moving structure of animal bodies, the strength of each muscle could never have been so wonderfully adapted to the bone which it was intended to move and support. The Epicureans, by way of reply, have alledged that the muscles were not different by nature, but that those which had the greatest motion became the most brawny,



in the same manner as those men who undergo the most labor and exercise are the most robust. This is certainly the only refuge of atheism. But *Galen* * easily proved the falsity of their assertion. He made it appear by demonstration, that in infants, taken out of their mother's womb, these proportions of the muscles were as discernible as in persons of the most athletic make.

The various kinds of agreeable sensations furnish us, also, with a proof of the existence of a Deity; they are distinguished by natural characters, to impute the cause of which to blind chance, would be the highest absurdity.

Whence comes it, that in the productions of art the relation which the parts bear to their principal end, gives us no pleasure till we are made susceptible of it

* *De usu partium.*

by instruction? while, by a secret charm prior to every reflection, we become at once sensible of the beauty of the structure of man, of animals, and plants? Can we suppose the author of nature himself ignorant of what he reveals to us? Shall we deny intelligence to the architect of the universe, whose bounteous hand has imprinted such strokes of beauty every where around us, that we are hereby instructed in the relation which the different parts of his works have to their destination.

These characters are more or less striking, according to the importance of what they declare. Amongst all the objects presented to our senses, nothing makes a more agreeable impression than a fine face; but the most beautiful feature delights us not so much as the graces of the mind, which, in their turn, are eclipsed by the splendor of elevated sentiments and noble actions,

that display superior courage and greatness of soul.

The beauty of the body has the advantage of being always present to our eyes, whilst that of the mind and soul can display itself only on particular occasions. But whenever these different species of beauty are presented to us, the pleasure they afford will always correspond to the degree and order which I have mentioned: and thus it is that nature teaches us what experience confirms. The beauty of the understanding conduces more to our happiness than that of the body; but is inferior to that which accompanies the virtuous qualities of the heart. We mean here only to inquire into the impression made upon us by different objects, when presented to our sight like pictures, and when no unruly passion obstructs our view.

The same wisdom which has thus diver-

sified the beauties of the body, the understanding, and the soul, has likewise separately distinguished their motions; those of the mind or understanding are more agreeable than those of the body, and are less so than the affections or motions of the soul.

Besides, there is another difference in our pleasures which proclaims aloud the being of an intelligent power. Agreeable smells, noble pieces of architecture, the charms of painting, oratory, music, geometry, and history, the enjoyment of a select company—all these naturally give pleasure; but the privation of them causes no pain; they are not supplies to our necessary wants, they are only agreeable amusements which serve to enrich and increase our happiness. They are unknown to the greatest part of mankind, who, nevertheless, pass their lives very agreeably. Even those who are most capable of enjoy-

ing these pleasures can part with them for others. It is not so with other agreeable sensations. Thus for instance, the law of nature which prompts us to take nourishment, not only rewards our compliance, but also inflicts punishment if we disobey her call. She has not deem'd it sufficient to incite us, by a particular pleasure, to be careful of our preservation; she, likewise, stimulates, by a more powerful motive, the dread of pain.

A perfect unity of design may be discovered, not only in the strength, but also in the duration of our sensations. Those which affect our sight, our hearing, the imagination, or the heart; those which accompany moderate exercise, seem always to present themselves; they fill up our vacant hours without prejudice to our health. It is not so with the pleasure of taking nourishment. Were its duration to be extended beyond the proper bounds, the immode-

rate use of the most wholesome food might turn it into deadly poison.

Of all pleasures there are none so remarkable as those which we feel at the beginning of life, and which contribute to the duration of it. How could we nourish and support a new born infant? Nature would in vain, have furnished the mother's breast with proper sustenance, had she not at the same time enabled the child to extract the precious liquor. Let us here acknowledge the providence of an almighty power. The infant, as yet incapable of any other exercise of its faculties, finds a secret pleasure in moving its lips and cheeks, and this in such a manner as to open a passage for the milk when offered to its mouth. The pleasant taste of the nourishment is a fresh motive to make it repeat these motions. It passes away the beginning of life in sleep, or in the enjoyment of such other pleasures as it is capable of feeling; so that this in-

firm being, which at first appears to be in a state of misery, lives in a succession of agreeable sensations.

The same being, who is the author of our happiness, is likewise the cause of our pain; and on this account some philosophers, by way of resentment, have presumed to deny his intelligence, and debase him into blind chance. Among these, Mr. *Bayle* has been a remarkable champion, the sum of whose doctrine is as follows:

“ If a sovereign and intelligent being
 “ had established the laws of sensation, he
 “ would certainly have enriched his creatures
 “ with all the happiness of which they
 “ were susceptible; he would, therefore,
 “ have excluded from the universe all
 “ painful sensations, especially those which
 “ can be no ways serviceable. To what
 “ purpose are the agonies of a man groa-
 “ ning under an incurable distemper, or
 “ the pains of a woman in labor in a desert?”

Such is the famous objection stated by Mr. *Bayle*, upon which he has dwelt so long in his writings, and which he has incessantly repeated in a thousand different shapes; and though the objection is not new, having been urged ever since pain was known in the world, yet he has proclaimed it with so many pompous illustrations, that many philosophers and divines have been alarmed, as at some unheard of prodigy. Some have called in metaphysics to their aid; others have had recourse to the immensity of the heavens, and by way of consolation, have informed us of an infinite variety of worlds peopled by happy inhabitants.

I shall not make use of any new hypothesis, but confine myself to the objection itself, and from thence bring a proof of the very doctrine it opposes; nor shall I avail myself of any observations and reflections but such as may occur on the slightest attention.

Most philosophers, instead of forming ideas

of beings from their nature, have taken their notions of them from their own ideas. Buried in the closet, they have searched into the hidden recesses of nature, and like the hero of *Cervantes*, with their eyes blindfolded, and mounted upon a wooden horse, have, in their own conceit, traversed the whole universe, defined the nature of all beings, and assigned to each its particular functions.

Such is Mr. *Bayle's* method of philosophizing. He has wrested the meaning of some theological terms, and from thence inferred, there can be no other power in God but that of making all his creatures happy. Having thus constructed an idol which nature, as well as religion, disclaims, it was easy for him to demolish the work of his own hands. Natural theology is a branch of physics. If we are desirous to guard ourselves against any illusions in our theological inquiries, let us follow the

method which has been adopted with success in the investigation of those sciences that have a more immediate connexion with theology. Let us consult nature in our observations, and let her discoveries determine our ideas.

Concerning the author of the laws of sensation, two very different questions may be asked; Is he intelligent? Is he beneficent? If we blend these two questions together, instead of considering them distinctly; if we deny him to be an intelligent being, for no other reason, than because his beneficence does not correspond to our desires, this would be offering violence to the primary laws of thought. Let us not then confound these two questions, but examine them separately, and begin with the first.

Experience teaches us that there are blind, as well as intelligent causes. We distinguish them by the nature of their productions, and unity of design is the seal which an

intelligent cause stamps upon his work. But this unity is conspicuous throughout all the laws of sensation. Pleasure and pain are equally conducive to our preservation ; the former points out what is agreeable to our nature, the latter, what is prejudicial thereto. Such aliments as are proper to be changed into our substance are characterized by certain pleasing impressions ; whilst hunger and thirst put us in mind, that perspiration and exercise make a considerable waste in our bodies, and that it would be dangerous to defer too long the repairing of the loss.

There are nerves extended through every part of the body which give notice of the approach of any disorder ; and the painful sensation is proportionate to the violence that attacks the nervous system. We are thus warned, by the force of the distemper, to be more or less anxious to remove the cause, and to seek out a remedy. It sometimes happens, that pain which gives notice

of the evil, serves no other purpose than to warn us of our approaching end. Nothing can then administer relief. It is with the laws of sensation as with those of motion. These regulate the succession of changes which happen in bodies, and sometimes bring down rain upon rocks and barren lands. The laws of sensation, in like manner, have an influence upon the succession of changes which happen in animated beings, and those pains that appear to serve no useful purpose, are often the necessary consequences of such changes, and flow from the particular circumstances of our situation. But though these different laws seem to be useless in particular cases, yet this inconvenience is less than if they were always mutable: In that case, there would be no fixed principle to direct the motions of men or of animals.

Besides, the laws of motion are so perfectly adapted to the structure of bodies,

that throughout the whole fabric of the universe, they preserve the elements from decay, and furnish all animals and plants with what is useful and necessary. Those of sensation are, in like manner, so completely fitted to the organs of animals as to discover to them whatever is agreeable to their nature, inviting them to pursue what conduces to their good, and warning them to shun whatever is prejudicial thereto. How incomprehensible, how infinite the wisdom of the great author of nature, who, by a machinery so uniform, simple, and extensive, varies continually the face of the universe, and yet preserves it always the same !

C H A P. XI.

The laws of sensation prove a beneficent, as well as intelligent Being.

THE laws of sensation, together with all the material works of creation, not only demonstrate an intelligent cause, but undeniably prove to us the bounty and beneficence of a supreme governor of the world.

When my hand is benumbed with cold, and I move it too near the fire, the exquisite pain I feel makes me draw it back immediately. In like manner, I am every hour indebted to the friendly alarms of nature, for the preservation of some part of my body.

But if I keep at a moderate distance from the fire, I feel an agreeable warmth; and thus it is, when the impression of outward objects, the exercise of the mind or of the
body,

body, and the emotions of the heart, contribute in any degree to the duration or perfection of our being, the author of nature has annexed to them a very sensible pleasure. For the truth of this observation, I appeal to that profusion of pleasing sensations which arise from painting, sculpture, architecture, all the objects of sight, as well as music, dancing, poetry, eloquence, history, geometry, all the sciences, and the various employments of life, friendship, tender affection, and in short, from every motion and exercise of the body, the mind, and the soul.

Mr. *Bayle* and some other philosophers, much concerned at the calamities incident to mankind, have not thought them sufficiently recompensed by the blessings of life; and seem in a manner to lament that they had not the power of framing the laws of sensation. Let us for a moment suppose this office to have been assigned them by nature,

and consider in idea their plan of administration. They would, perhaps have entirely excluded from the world all painful sensations. We should then have lived only for pleasure. But our life would have resembled one of those flowers that springs up and dies the same day. Neither hunger, thirst, cold, nor lassitude, nor any other pain would have given us notice of present or future evils; there would have been no check to restrain us in the use of pleasure, and pain would have been annihilated in the universe, only to make way for death, which, to destroy the whole animal race, would arm itself with their very blessings, as well as evils.

The mighty legislators of whom we have been speaking, in order to prevent this universal destruction, would perhaps have had recourse to painful sensations, but have thought it sufficient to weaken their impression. Such a medium would be ineffectual, and

would serve only to warn, not to excite with any quick sensibility.

But all the inconveniencies of the first system would have been found likewise in the second. The voice of those gentle monitors would have been too feeble to be heard in the eagerness of pleasure. How many are there, who warm in the pursuit of it, can scarcely listen to the threats of the most exquisite pain. Death would then suddenly overtake us in the enjoyment of those very blessings which we fondly imagine would secure the duration of our life.

Or perhaps, by way of recompence for pain, they would have added a more vivid glow to the pleasures of the senses. But those of the mind and soul, which are the best adapted to fill up the void of life, would then have become insipid, and the intoxication of a few moments would embitter the rest of our days with chagrin and disgust.

Were the pleasures of the soul to be increased as a consolation for our pain, we should then overlook all care of the body.

In short, supposing all our pleasures to be augmented in one and the same proportion, those of the senses, as well as those of the mind and heart; our painful sensations must of necessity be increased in the same degree. It would be no less destructive to mankind, to heighten the sensation of pleasure, without an equal proportion of pain, than it would be to abate the sensation of the one, without lessening also that of the other. An alteration in either of these two respects, must produce the same effect, by weakening that restraint which prevents us from giving a loose to excesses that would prove mortal.

The same legislators would, no doubt, have characterized with an agreeable impression all things necessary for our preservation; but could we expect them to display an ingenuity equal to that of nature, in laying open to the sight, to the hearing, and the mind, so

many fertile sources of agreeable sensations, by that inexhaustible variety of objects, by their symmetry, proportion, and analogy? Would they have marked with so lively and agreeable an impression, that relative harmony which constitutes the charm of music, as well as the graces of the body and the mind? Would they have established that beautiful order which we behold in the animal and vegetable system, and which is no less extended to our intellectual faculty, and internal sensations?

Let us then not wish for that reformation which *Epicurus* and *Bayle* would introduce into the laws of sensation; but rather acknowledge such to be the goodness of our creator, that he has liberally dispensed every mode of pleasure, and every agreeable sensation which characterizes the hand of infinite wisdom.

I shall not here go about to refute the absurd and impious doctrine of the * *Ma-*

* The *Manichees* were a famous sect of heretics,

nicheans, who held that there were two deities, one of whom they made the author of good, and the other of evil. Mr. *Bayle* seems to have revived this doctrine, which has been held in abhorrence for so many ages, and to have taken shelter under this system, as one who after a defeat in battle, flies for refuge to any heap of ruins which he may chance to meet with in his way. Besides, Mr. *Bayle* was not superstitious enough to believe in two deities. But, whatever his private opinion might be, I shall only observe, that since the distribution of pleasure and of pain equally answer the same unity of design, it can, by no means, be a proof of the existence of two separate intelligences, at variance with each other.

founded by one *Manes*, who propagated his tenets so early as the third century; and notwithstanding their many impious absurdities, had an amazing number of followers.—For a particular account of this sect, see *Mosheim's Eccles. Hist.*

C H A P. XII.

*Of the pleasure annexed to the performance of
our duty towards God.*

WE degrade ourselves when we admire what is either inferior or equal to us. But when we have taken a survey of the works of a supreme being, and behold such infinite art displayed in every part of the creation, the degree of admiration is then in proportion to the greatness of the soul. And although ignorance commonly gives birth to this sensation, yet in this case it rises according to our knowledge.

If the infinite intelligence of the Deity attracts our admiration, his unbounded goodness is no less entitled to our gratitude and confidence.

Epicurus, by endeavouring to confute the

existence of a God, thought himself happy to disprove a power that was an enemy to our felicity. But why should we entertain so false an idea of a being, who having endued us with different tastes, thereby presents us on all sides with agreeable sensations; who has furnished us with a variety of faculties, and these of such a nature that the exercise of each of them gives us pleasure. Are the blessings which are thus dispensed to us less valuable for being the gifts of a supreme intelligent being; or ought we not rather to prize them more highly, since they are the pledges of his goodness?

In short, when we consider the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God, it becomes us to submit with patient resignation to the afflictions with which he is pleased to visit us; and to bear the loss of blessings, of which he may deprive us, without murmuring.

Shall we rebel against infinite power?

Let us not aggravate our misfortunes by frowardness of heart, and an involuntary submission to the will of omnipotence.

Placed in the universe, as in the garden of Eden, if we cannot taste the fruit of one tree, let us with gratitude accept the produce of so many others which we are liberally invited to partake of. Let us enjoy what is offered to us without repining at what is refused. Desire is nourished by hope, but dies away when there is no possibility of attaining its object. Is there any man so unreasonable as to complain, because he is not seated on the throne of the Mogul? Let not the privation of any thing which does not constitute a part of the happiness allotted to our sphere, torment us with fruitless desire, with discontent, and chagrin. We ought indeed to consider the acquisition of it to be as impossible as the possession would be in effect baneful. When we submit ourselves

with humility to almighty power, we shall have the inward satisfaction to think, that could we ourselves be admitted into his councils, we should applaud the motives of his laws, and admire the rule of his actions. Such is our duty towards God, which an eternal law prescribes to all intelligent beings. And the performance of it is attended with pleasure, which accompanies every emotion of the soul that is untainted with fear or with hatred.

C H A P. XIII.

Of the pleasure which accompanies the performance of our duty towards ourselves.

OUR duty to ourselves consists in knowing how to set a just value on the blessings we enjoy, and to bear our misfortunes with resolution.

There was a sect of philosophers who seemed desirous to extirpate all manner of pleasure. Their schools constantly echoed with this austere lesson, "Abstain from all pleasures." But why so? since they offer themselves every where around us, when we open our eyes, or listen with our ears, when we quench our thirst, or satisfy our hunger, in our employments, as well as in our amusements, in solitude and in society. Shall we then despise all these

blessings which are connected with our existence, or shall we not rather, with grateful hearts, rejoice in the possession of them?

Moreover I affirm, that pleasure springs from the bosom of virtue. An inward satisfaction never fails to accompany those employments which are suited to our abilities, and to our situation in life. The pleasure we take in our relaxation, is most agreeable when used with such moderation as not to create disgust. Of all the events recorded in history, or represented in tragedy, none are more pleasing than those in which the beauty of the soul shines forth in all its lustre.

The friendship that springs from virtue gives rise to the most exquisite pleasure. And of all the connexions that are formed by affections, none can be superior to those which make us fix our esteem upon the virtuous qualities of the person who is the

object of our friendship; which reconcile our tastes, unite our views, and render our interests mutual.

Here a question of no small importance occurs, which, long before the time of *Epicurus* and *Plato*, divided mankind into two sects. — Whether the pleasures of the senses are superior to those of the soul. In order to determine this point, let us imagine them to be distinct and separate from each other, and carry them to the highest perfection, of which they are capable. Let us suppose that a being insensible to the pleasures of the mind, should taste those of the body throughout its whole existence, but destitute of all knowledge and apprehension, be unable to remember those which it has felt, or to foresee any which it is to enjoy. Let us suppose such a being shut up, as it were, in its shell, whose *summum bonum* consisted in a deaf and blind sensation, that affected it only for the present

moment. On the other hand, let us suppose a man dead to all the pleasures of the senses, but who enjoys, to their full extent, all those of the mind, and of the heart. If he is alone, philosophy, mathematics, and the polite sciences, furnish him with a continual succession of delightful ideas, and every moment of his retirement is distinguished by some fresh testimony of the force and extent of his faculties. If he lives in society, friendship and glory, the natural concomitants of virtue, afford him external proofs of the grandeur and beauty of his soul; and his conduct, approved by reason, makes him feel that secret joy and satisfaction which nothing can impair or destroy.

There are, I believe, few men who have any notion of these two different species of pleasure, who, were they to have their choice, would prefer, to use the expression of *Socrates*, the condition of an oyster, to the happiness of a deity.

The pleasures of the body are never more lively than when they are remedies to pain. It is the degree of thirst that determines the degree of pleasure in quenching it. *Socrates*, who studied truth more than beauty in his images, compares these sensations to those we feel in scratching any part that itches; an uneasiness precedes and accompanies them, and where the pain ceases the pleasure too is annihilated. Most pleasures of the mind and heart are not adulterated with this impure mixture of pain.

Besides, all that is exquisite in sensual pleasure, is derived from the mind, or the heart. Without their assistance, it soon cloy, and becomes insipid.

In a word, the pleasures of the body have scarcely any duration, but what they borrow from a temporary want, and when they extend beyond the supply of it, become principles of pain. The pleasures of the mind and heart are therefore greatly superior,

were they attended with no other advantage than to be much better adapted to fill up the void of life.

But among all the sensations of the mind and of the heart, to which must we give the preference? I believe the concurrent testimony of all men will adjudge it to those that flatter most our self-love. Whence comes it that we are more offended with contempt than with hatred? Because the doubt of our own perfection affects us more sensibly than the danger of losing any other possession.

A comic writer among the Greeks has remarked, that the most effectual means to secure a prisoner were not commonly put in practice. Why, said he, might we not allow pleasure to guard him? why not blind him in her fetters? *Plautus* and *Aristotle* have adopted this whimsical pleasantry. But these poets must surely have had a very superficial knowledge of the human heart, if they really believed their captive would not have broken

his

his chains. There would have been no necessity to display to him the lustre of glory: as soon as he found himself despicable, the dread of contempt would have alarmed him, and he would have been urged to prefer glorious danger, to dishonorable pleasure. For the truth of this assertion, we need only appeal to the frequent instances of it that are to be met with throughout Europe. How many who have lead a pleasurable life in the midst of ease and indulgence, have forsaken their bed of down to face danger and death, and to undergo all the fatigues of war. Glory has more attractive charms in the eye of some persons than pleasure, and mankind in general fear pain and death less than contempt.

It is this idea of glory and perfection which for more than two thousand years, has rendered the Indians insensible to the horror of burning themselves alive. It has precipitated men into the jaws of death, charmed with

the prospect of gaining immortal fame by such an act of heroism. It is a kind of idol to which, in order to wipe off an affront, men frequently sacrifice their country, their repose, every enjoyment, and life itself. Even love, which seems to depend entirely upon the senses, is indebted to the ideas of fancy for its most refined pleasures.

All those things which flatter us agreeably, are not equally valuable. To endeavour to gain the esteem of others, without having our own internal approbation, is to be content with being sick, provided only we have the outward appearance of health. Nature has not intrusted to reason alone to point out to us this important truth, for though she has annexed a particular pleasure to the esteem of others, yet she has fixed a sort of blemish on those who anxiously seek for applause. But in this, does she not seem to be at variance with herself? Why should she forbid, under pain of ridicule, a pursuit

which she seems to authorize by the pleasure that attends it? Here let us not impeach her law, but admire her wisdom. She acquaints us, by the secret voice of internal sensation, that public esteem is the recompence due to virtue, but that it ought not to be the only motive to great and good actions. We, in a manner, degrade ourselves, and seem to be low in our own esteem, when we discover so eager a solicitude for that of others. Let us first seek the silent testimony of an upright conscience, of which neither hatred nor malice can bereave us, which, in the end, will be crowned with the applause of mankind, and what is incomparably more valuable, will be accompanied with the approbation of our Creator.

Let us then not suffer ourselves to be deluded by the flattery of a false judgment. Behold that man who is absorbed in melancholy and dejection; he imagined all grandeur to consist in a numerous train of

attendants;—by these he measured his own greatness—a sudden reverse of fortune has obliged him to diminish the half of his retinue—he is insensible to all other happiness—and is become wretched by the loss of what was in reality useless. Turn your eyes to that other person, who in the midst of opulence and splendor is seized with frenzy and despair. All *his* happiness depended on the affection of a wife, or on the favor of his prince—his darling pleasure has been torn away from him;—and the loss has so embittered his heart, that he is incapable of enjoying any of the blessings that surround him.

It is true, there are phantoms of pleasure, to which a lively and luxuriant, but deluded imagination gives birth, and which cast forth, as it were, a flash more vivid and brilliant than the soft and durable light that accompanies reason. But this fleeting sensation, like to that which renders

drinking more agreeable to a man in a fever than to one in health, always indicates a malady in the soul, from whence springs a restless anxiety in quest of some darling object, disgust in the enjoyment, and despair when we are unable to attain it.

We feel a degree of happiness, not only in the real proofs of our perfection; it depends likewise on the nature and manner of our employments.

Amidst all the different occupations that offer themselves, are we to follow indiscriminately, and without measure, those which are attended with the greatest pleasure? — An uniform continuance of the same sensations, will soon blunt the sensitive faculty.

The most delicious pleasures in excess, produce a loathing and weariness that scarcely ever fail to attend satiety. And what before gave the most extacy and joy, is turned into an object of aversion. How

then shall we defend ourselves against such formidable enemies? We can succeed by no other means than by diffusing variety through every employment of our faculties. And, to this end, we must be willing to suffer a temporary privation, from whence every pleasing object of our taste will borrow a fresh appearance of novelty. The pleasures of the mind and of the body, rest and motion, retirement and society, relaxation from business, and serious employment; all these acquire new charms by succeeding each other; and their variety produces the same effect in life as the difference of concords in harmony.

In our different faculties lies hidden a store of valuable seeds, which, if not cultivated, perish; but spring up and flourish under the auspices of science. In proportion as they are expanded by such liberal studies, we are furnished with preservatives against the assaults of our passions, and

with expedients to render life more agreeable.

A great poet informs us, by way of allegory, that *Jupiter* had opened two fountains at the foot of his throne, the one of pleasure, the other of pain, and that, as he pleased, he mixed these opposite liquors, thus distributing to each man happiness or misery in proportion to the mixture. May we not with propriety apply this fiction to the different kinds of agreeable sensations? The idea of our perfection, and the successive exercise of our different faculties, are two sources continually flowing with different pleasures. A wise and beneficent being dispenses them in equal portions to the good and wise man, and pours them out upon him incessantly.

Let us therefore not place the sovereign good either in riches, or in grandeur. There is no station or condition of life, in which it is not in our power to form

a chain of agreeable sensations, by following a series of virtuous employments, such as may exercise, without fatiguing, our faculties.

Those only are happy in possessing the gifts of fortune who can be equally so without them. And, in fact, that man enjoys true felicity, who confining his desires within the circle of real wants, grasps not at any thing beyond them. Thus intrenched, he is effectually secured against the uneasiness of melancholy and vexation; but no sooner does the human heart exceed the limits assigned by nature, than it loses itself in an immense labyrinth, where there are no bounds to stop, nor any clue to direct its violent desires.

Health, keen appetite, and strength of body, seem to be the blessings attached to poverty. The pleasures of the mind, of friendship, and affection, tranquillity of soul, joy, and inward satisfaction, as often

attend upon a middling station as upon the pomp of princes. What then are the peculiar advantages of wealth and grandeur? — Our self-love is flattered by the magnificent structure of our houses, by the richness of our furniture and equipage, or perhaps by the power of commanding others. We may certainly be happy in a right use of these possessions, but we are very blamable, if we really stand in need of such delusive marks of happiness. They are like perfumes or concerts of music; it is pleasing to enjoy them, but a man must be very unfortunate indeed if he cannot be well without them.

Wisdom not only preserves us from chagrin, it is likewise a security against pain, which in vigorous constitutions almost always springs from excess, and when she cannot exclude it entirely, she can at least blunt the edge of its impression, which acquires strength, in proportion

to the want of courage to oppose it. *Xenophon*, so deservedly famous for his glorious retreats, assures us that the same degree of fatigue is not so irksome to the general as to the common soldier; because the vanity of the former supports half the burden, which the latter is obliged to bear entire upon his shoulders. Indians, savages and fanatics, have shown a chearfulness in the midst of the most exquisite tortures, and so great hath been their command of mind, as to be able to divert their attention from the sensation of pain, and to fix it on that phantom of perfection to which they devoted themselves. Is it impossible that reason and virtue also, should learn even from ambition and prejudice, to weaken the impression of pain by a happy diversion of mind?

C H A P. XIV.

Of the pleasure that accompanies the performance of our duties towards others.

IF we are desirous to perform our duty towards mankind, let us be just and beneficent. It is a precept that morality enjoins, and to the practice of which the theory of sensations invites us.

Injustice, the fatal source of so many evils, not only afflicts those who are its victims, but like a serpent, begins with destroying the man who harbours the monster in his bosom. It has its rise from immoderate desire of riches and of honors, but carries along with it uneasiness and discontent. For though the unjust man may flatter himself with being able to escape the vengeance of men, or the judgment of God, yet

surely he must lament having placed his happiness in the uncertain and transitory possession of objects, that depend upon the caprice of others, and lie at the disposal of fortune.

Pride and interest, not only subject our happiness to external objects, but also by a secret enmity to every thing around us, spread in our hearts the seeds of universal hatred, which weaken or obstruct every principle of friendship and benevolence. On the contrary, if we are free from those corrosive passions, we look upon other men in the same light as upon the heroes of a tragedy, and the heart, by nature disposed to love, will spontaneously incline to benevolence and friendship. Now, if it is true that every degree of benevolence is a pleasure, and that sorrow itself, when arising from thence, is accompanied with a secret satisfaction; and that every emotion of envy and hatred is attended with pain: our happiness

then must be more complete and durable, in proportion as our manner of life tends to inspire us with sentiments of love and benevolence, and to remove those of hatred and ill-will.

The habitual practice of justice and benevolence that makes us happy, chiefly by the emotions excited in the heart, renders us still more so by the sentiments which are thereby inspired into those with whom we converse.

The author of nature, whose wisdom has furnished us with such tastes as conduce to our preservation, has likewise implanted in us two different desires with respect to other men, that of being feared, and that of being loved.

In that state of nature, or of liberty, which according to our civilians, preceded the establishment of laws, it was of greater importance, and consequently more agreeable, to be feared than to be loved, the

former being a surer defence than the latter against the hostile attempts of ambition or interest. Thus to princes, who may be considered in this predicament, with respect to each other, it is more flattering to be dreaded than to be loved by the neighbouring powers. But it is not so with individuals. The laws are the guardians of their property, their honor, and their lives. What can it avail them to be feared? But to such persons it is highly important, and consequently agreeable, to be loved. The love of others often obtains the most essential service, and is always accompanied with continual marks of esteem; which are commonly more pleasing than real favors. It has been said of praise, that to the person to whom it is offered, it is the most delightful music, and we may venture to affirm, that nothing can be more grateful to the mind than a consciousness of being loved.

It is by justice and benevolence that

we are entitled to this pleasing satisfaction. We cannot behold pride and injustice, if impotent, without contempt; and if powerful, without hatred. They endeavour to establish happiness on others' ruin: whereas virtue reconciles our happiness with that of others, and converts our own private advantage into the public good. Of this we may form some competent notion from the feeling that interests us, in favor of those virtuous heroes whom tragedy exhibits on the stage.

It is true indeed, the mask of virtue may produce this effect as well as virtue herself. But we may say of virtue what has been said of love; it is almost impossible to make the counterfeit pass current for any considerable time; the only way to appear just and benevolent is really to be so.

Let us suppose a man, who being hated by all his acquaintance, hates them equally in his turn. All the objects that are offered

to his sight will be offensive to him, all the emotions of his heart will be painful. Such, it is not improbable, is the condition of those miserable wretches, who, after death, are wholly devoted to hatred and injustice; these have been their crimes in this world, the practice of which has been the commencement of their punishment.

On the other hand, let us consider the just and benevolent man, who is happy in the love and esteem of all who know him, his life is one continued act of benevolence, and all the objects presented to him will be agreeable. All the emotions of his heart are so many pleasures. Such we may presume to be the state of those who are placed in the regions of bliss. They are continually employed in the exercise of benevolence; this was their delight here on earth, and even then began to yield them a recompence for their virtue.

Nothing is more uncommon to be met
with,

with, than a man perfectly unjust, or perfectly benevolent. Between these two extremes there lies an ocean, in which the greatest part of mankind fluctuate. The more our heart is addicted to hatred, the nearer is our approach to misery; and the greater portion we have of benevolence, the nearer we arrive to perfect happiness.

But it may be said, how can we avoid hating those who hurt us in our interest or reputation? The virtue is attended, no doubt with difficulty; yet what ought we to deem more valuable than our own happiness; and can we possibly be happy if we cherish hatred in our breasts? Let us only be as ingenious to extirpate it, as we are to vindicate and maintain the justice of it.

If those of whom we complain have founded their conduct towards us upon substantial reasons, why should we hate them, since their behaviour has been such as our own would have been under similar circumstances?

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If they attack us unjustly, we ought to lament their misfortune, in having within their breast a source of pain and uneasiness. They resemble sick persons, who, in a raging fever, imagine they shall cure themselves by wounding every one they meet. Let us beware of their fury, but not create our own punishment by giving way to irregular passions that disturb our tranquillity.

Besides those sentiments of humanity which we ought to entertain for mankind in general, there are likewise particular duties arising from the several stations wherein providence hath placed us. These may be reduced under one rule; to frame our conduct towards our superiors, our equals, and inferiors, as we would wish theirs to be, with respect to us in the like circumstances. The performance of these duties will procure us the esteem, the affection and confidence of all our acquaintance, and will kindle in them, as well as in ourselves, the warmest sentiments of benevolence.

Of all the duties that arise from our various connexions, there is one which seems to be almost beyond the reach of human nature; it is that of perfect friendship, which requires us to abandon our dearest interest in favor of our friend, and to look upon him as the most valuable part of ourselves.

There is not, however, a more fertile source of agreeable sensations than the performance of this duty, so harsh and difficult as it appears. And there is an exquisite pleasure also in the consciousness of being able to discharge it.

There have been celebrated writers who maintained, that we have more to lose than we can gain in the intercourse of friendship; that it is a kind of extension of ourselves, which exposes us to misery, not only in our own person, but in that of others also. This way of thinking, in my opinion, betrays a total ignorance of the power of friendship. Such is its magic charm,

from the mutual interest taken by sincere friends in whatever affects them , it multiplies their joys , and diminishes their sorrows. Even in their grief, there is diffused a soft and agreeable sensation, which they would not exchange for other pleasures, however lively.

C H A P. XV.

Of the happiness annexed to virtue.

AFTER having pointed out the different species of pleasure which accompany virtue, I will now collect them into one point of view.

Sextus Empiricus gives us an extract from a work of *Crantor* which treats of the pre-eminence due to the different kinds of happiness. This celebrated philosopher feigns that in imitation of the three goddesses, who submitted their beauty to the judgment of *Paris*, the several deities who preside over *Riches*, *Pleasure*, *Health*, and *Virtue*, presented themselves before the Greeks, when assembled at the *Olympic* games, and desired they would assign them their respective ranks,

according to the degree of influence they had over the happiness of men.

The magnificence and splendor of *Riches* were displayed, and began to dazzle the eyes of the judges, when *Pleasure* represented that the sole merit of *Riches* was to procure pleasure. She was near obtaining the pre-eminence. But *Health* hereupon advanced her plea, and alledged, that without her, joy would soon be converted into sorrow. At last *Virtue* put an end to the dispute, with the concurrent suffrages of all the Greeks, and affirmed, that were *Riches*, *Pleasure*, and *Health* to bestow their choicest blessings upon men, these would not avail against their enemies, without the help of prudence and valor. The first rank was therefore adjudged to *Virtue*, the second to *Health*, the third to *Pleasure*, and the fourth to *Riches*.

But in my opinion, it is degrading virtue, to make her chief business consist in being a

guard to her rivals, since her pre-eminence is founded upon a much nobler title.

Riches, pleasure, and health become evils to those who know not how to use them. Wisdom alone, properly speaking, deserves to be called a blessing, since it is she only who can never become an evil by an improper use. She removes from us all painful sensations, and excites in us all those which are the most agreeable. Regret for the past, sorrow for the present, and anxious concern for the future, are the scourges that afflict most sensibly the human race. Virtue defends us from their sting, by confining our desires within our proper sphere, by conforming them to reason, and subjecting them to the immutable laws of the omnipotent creator. Discontent and anxiety spread their infection even to the throne. But wisdom is beyond the reach of their contagion, and fills up the course of life with a succession of virtuous employments, forming thereby a series of

agreeable sensations. She even keeps at a distance pain and disease, which are often the fruits of intemperance, nor does she debar us of the most lively pleasures of the senses, which are generally proportionate to our real want of them. The pleasures of the mind follow in her train, and accompany her even in solitude, as well as in adversity. She secures us as much as possible from the caprice of others, and from the tyranny of fortune, teaching us to place our happiness not in the uncertain possession of transitory objects, but in such an exercise of our faculties as is suited to our present state and condition.

To whatever object the virtuous man directs his thoughts, towards God, or mankind in general, to his friends and acquaintance in particular, he perceives motives of inward satisfaction. He conforms himself to the design of his Creator, lives worthy of the attachment of his friends, and of all men. And were all intelligent beings to look into

his soul, they would equally love and esteem him. His heart, free from the perturbation of fear and of hatred, exists in an uninterrupted exercise of benevolence, that is, in the continual enjoyment of the most agreeable sensations. In short, the satisfaction that accompanies wisdom and virtue, is to the mind according to *Solomon's* expression, a perpetual feast. And thus it is, that all the different kinds of agreeable sensations become united in favor of the virtuous man, and being combined together in proportions regulated by their degrees of strength and vivacity, by their duration and congruity, form the most pleasing of all harmony.

Perhaps this picture may be only ideal, and the original exists not in nature. But we shall certainly be more happy the more we resemble the portrait.

But the greatest blessing which it is possible for the virtuous man to enjoy here below, is a consciousness that death, which

involves so many in despair, will to him be a passage into a state of perfect bliss.

The wicked and unjust man looks upon death as a hideous spectre, which every moment is advancing a step nearer towards him. This imbitters all his pleasures, aggravates his afflictions, and threatens to deliver him up to the wrath of God, who is the avenger of injured innocence. The most flattering notion that he can form in the prospect of death, is that he may be utterly annihilated. — But it is impossible he should long entertain so miserable a hope: the authority of revelation denies it; the internal consciousness of his own identity confutes it; and the awful idea of a just omnipotent deity, must infallibly destroy it.

It is not so with the virtuous man. In the prospect of death he beholds the presence of a beneficent and intelligent being, whose laws he has always revered, and whose goodness and bounty he has never failed to acknowledge.

If it is true that hope is in itself an agreeable sensation, and that it is so in proportion to the happiness which it has for its object, there cannot be upon earth a more delightful situation, than that of a man, who, feeling within himself a present bliss, in the uniform practice of every virtue, has, in death, the expectation of perfect felicity.

C H A P. XVI.

What kind of life is the most happy.

THE greatest part of mankind make their happiness to depend upon others, and even when arrived at the summit of grandeur, they often aspire to felicity under the title of suppliants; but it is almost impossible that those, who have it in their power to gratify their desires, should comply with them. The heart of every man, to use a *Cartesian* expression, is a kind of *vortex*, and the centre of its motion is its own personal happiness. To expect that our felicity should become the centre of the motions of others, would be to desire a change in their nature, it would be indeed, to wish, that our happiness should depend upon a miracle. Let us

therefore accommodate ourselves, in the best manner we are able, to the objects that surround us, but let us not fondly hope to attain any solid happiness, by any other means than by the exertion of our own faculties.

Those states or conditions of life I call happy, in which the pleasing sensations predominate over the painful; and they may be divided into three different classes, according as the motions of the body, the mind, and the heart are most prevalent.

If we were desirous to bring together a number of happy mortals, we should in vain look out for them amidst the high and brilliant stations of life; but our search would be more successful amongst those who subsist by moderate labor, and earn thereby a sufficient competence for themselves and their families. Of these we should find many whose life is free from all the torment of anxiety and chagrin, and who inwardly possess a secret fund of joy, which

is always ready to expand itself. If their days are not brightened with gaiety and splendor, they are calm and unclouded. They pass away in a succession of mild and pleasing sensations, which equally exclude all intemperate pleasure and every poignant grief.

The exercise of the body is not so agreeable as that of the mind. A course of life, therefore, devoted to the sciences will be more susceptible of happiness, than if employed in mechanical operations. What can be more pleasing than to be able to enjoy all seasons, all places, and universal nature? This pleasure, however, so exquisite, falls to the lot only of a few extraordinary persons. It is a kind of sanctuary, from whence a barbarous ignorance has excluded the greatest part of mankind. The same barbarism has stifled the rising buds of science in many individuals, though for the punishment of the human race, it has spread glory and renown over

the injustice and rapine of mighty conquerors.

Since the emotions and affections of the heart afford the most pleasing sensation, hence we may infer that to be the happiest life in which benevolence presides.

Those to whom fortune has been lavish of her favors, can never taste the genuine sweets of her bounty, unless they are inclined to impart it to others. We must estimate their happiness by the number of those whom they make happy.

There is no happiness equal to that of a prince, who confines not his benevolence within the narrow circle of his courtiers and flatterers, but extends it alike to all his subjects: who strives to banish misery from his dominions, and is the liberal patron of every art and science: under whose auspices industry and commerce flourish, and by whose countenance men of genius and virtue are honored. Such a prince is morally sure of increasing and

confirming his power. He has the pleasing idea of being the vicegerent of the Deity, in distributing felicity to mankind; and views the prospect of a people, at large, made happy by his reign. He enjoys the execution of so noble a plan, independant of all the vicissitudes of fortune. A continual succession of the most delightful emotions of benevolence, all the objects that surround him, every idea of his mind, and all the feelings of his heart, unite to confer upon him all the happiness of which human nature is capable.

And yet, it may be, that in this train of virtuous sensations, there are none so quick and lively as those which inspire a conqueror, whose ambition is flushed with victory; but his pleasure is dearly purchased at the hazard of becoming the most wretched of men: since his taste and ruling passion contain the seeds of hatred, vexation, and discontent.

CHAP.

C H A P. XVII.

*Moral philosophy proved to be attainable by
all men.*

FROM the foregoing observations may be inferred, what perhaps may seem to be a paradox to many: that moral philosophy may be comprehended by all who are capable of the least reflection. Philosophers, however, and most legislators condemn the vulgar to profound ignorance: They seem not to have known any other means of restraining them, but through the fear of punishment. *Plato* himself, in his republic, where he advances the boldest notions, has not ventured to form a people completely virtuous, but has invested the magistrate alone with the charge of moral philosophy. But what are the profound investigations of this science? Why is it intrusted to the care of particular persons alone? In my

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opinion the whole doctrine may be comprised in the two following maxims.

1. We ought , as much as possible , to place our happiness , not in things out of our reach , but in a series of employments adapted to our talents and to our conditions.

2. Our conduct, with respect to mankind, ought to be such as to dispose our hearts to the practice of benevolence. towards them ; and to banish from our mind all hatred, uneasiness, melancholy, and discontent.

Now , in order to apprehend the truth of these maxims, we are not required to soar up to the heavens , nor to descend to the regions below ; they are as easy to be understood as the principles of the most common arts, and a man will find them equally demonstrated, whether he considers himself personally, or turns his eyes to the various objects that surround him.

The artisan mentioned by *Horace*, might suffice to convince a whole people, that no individual can be happy without such

exercise and employment as is suited to his talents and condition of life.—The whole neighbourhood resounded with his songs, which began with the day and ended with the night. A grandee, in order to be rid of his troublesome music, made him a present of an estate, when immediately his good humor and gaiety forsook him, and made way for care and anxiety. Take back your gift, said he, to his benefactor, and restore me to my former occupation.

As to the expediency of not placing our happiness in any external objects, we learn from *Lucian*, that the *Athenians* were so well convinced of this truth, that they treated with indifference and contempt those strangers who endeavoured, as it were, to surprise their esteem by the pomp and splendor of their retinue.

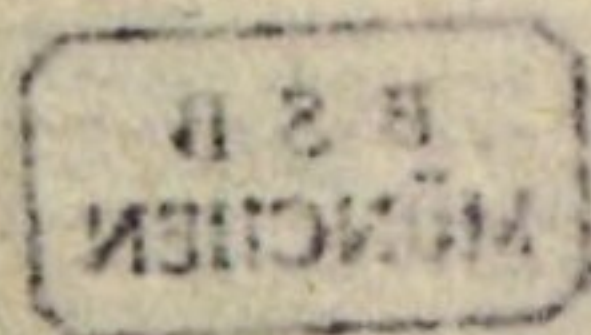
In short, we need but be capable of loving and of hating, to be sensible that our life

will be happy in proportion as we cherish sentiments of benevolence in our hearts, and as we are free from every principle of hatred and ill-will. — — We are assured by historians and travellers, that among those nations whose manner of life excludes all immoderate desire of riches, generosity and beneficence towards those whom they believe to have no enmity against them, are esteemed the most amiable and popular virtues.

The maxims which I have here advanced, so important in their nature, and so striking in their evidence, are nevertheless hidden from the bulk of mankind, and moral philosophy, so worthy to be universally revered, seems like the *Jupiter* of Egypt, to have fixed her temple in a desert. Constitutional defects, together with extreme poverty on the one hand, and excessive riches on the other, may be ranked amongst the particular causes of this ignorance; but we may pronounce the more general one to be, an erroneous education.

Those of *Lacedemon* and *China*, seem to have been almost the only legislators who thought it their indispensable duty not to intrust to the uncertain skill of parents or of masters, a charge which they deemed the most important object of legislative power. In the code of their laws, they have delineated a plan of education at large, in all its important branches, to the intent that every member of the state might become thereby thoroughly instructed in what manner to pursue his real happiness. They have carried into execution, what is regarded as impracticable even in theory, — the forming a philosophic people. And the accounts we have from history, leave us no room to doubt that those nations abounded in great and virtuous characters. We may also presume, the number would have been still greater, could their education have been rendered yet more complete, and their morality more perfect.

FINIS.



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